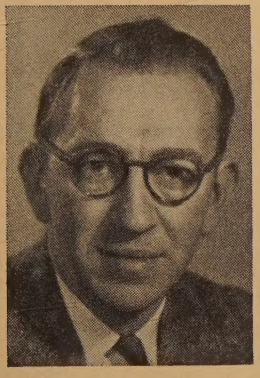
The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching



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J. Edward Dirks:
The Absence And the Event of God

Herbert Beecher Hudnut • "He Saved Others"

Charles C. Knapp • The Inescapable Theme

Ronald E. Sleeth • Tragedy and Triumph

Lowell M. Atkinson • When Right Rules Might

Charles M. Crowe • The Great Procession

GEORGE H. HENRY
WHAT IS A CHURCH SCHOOL FOR?

OL. XXXI, No. 4 APRIL 1960

The Pulpit

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CONTENTS: APRIL 1960

SERMONS

The Absence and the Event of God ..... *J. Edward Dirks* 4
"He Saved Others" ..... *Herbert Beecher Hudnut* 9
The Inescapable Theme ..... *Charles C. Knapp* 12
Tragedy and Triumph ..... *Ronald E. Sleeth* 15
When Right Rules Might ..... *Lowell M. Atkinson* 17
The Great Procession ..... *Charles M. Crowe* 20

ARTICLES

What Is a Church School For? ..... *George H. Henry* 6
The Rhythm of Sacramental Worship ... *Walter S. Davison* 24

FEATURES

Book Reviews 26
Editorial 3
Prayers 2, 11
Pulpit Calendar 31

Prayer

ETERNAL God, our heavenly Father, help us to believe this day that there is a power to lift us up which is far stronger than all the things that would hold us down. Make us to be sensitive to what is beautiful and responsive to that which is good, that day by day we may be quick to see and ready to encourage whatever brings a better understanding of life and a keener insight into human relationships.

Open the way for each of us, O God, to earn an honest living without anxiety. But let us never forget the needs of others; may we want only those benefits for ourselves which will also be a gain for our fellow men. Make us patient and sympathetic with the shortcomings of others. Keep us sternly watchful only of our own deeds, judging ourselves in the light of the highest principles and ideals.

Keep us this day from the reach of any evil to the body, but more so, from any danger to clear thinking and moral living. Help us to believe that the ideals of religion are not a far-off dream, but a power to command our loyalty and direct our lives. Bless each of us, and those we love, with the true joys of life — with freedom, integrity, happiness and peace of mind. Amen — *Donald E. Riker, First Presbyterian Church, Peoria, Illinois.*

The Pulpit

A Journal of Contemporary Preaching

VOLUME XXXI APRIL 1960 No. 4

First a Purpose . . .

HENRY BROOKS ADAMS said, "He too serves a certain purpose who only stands and cheers." At times some of its readers may have assumed that this paraphrase of Milton states the role of The Pulpit: to stand and cheer as a parade of preachers passes by. This, of course, has not been and in the future will not be the purpose of this periodical.

What, then, is its design? For several years this magazine has carried on its masthead the subordinate but definitive line: "A Journal of Contemporary Preaching." This secondary title has both merit and deficiency. It is meritorious in telling *what;* it is deficient in explaining *why.* The label is an honest one; but one of the least words of it, the preposition *of,* invites the conclusion that the ultimate objective of the magazine is to discover and present to its readers commendable samples of contemporary preaching. This, however, is only the intermediary goal; there is a further objective.

When we read the word *of* in the subtitle, let us think of the word *for:* The Pulpit is a journal *for* contemporary preaching. This is to say that the work is dedicated, not to the discovery of great preachers but to the cultivation of good ones. It is not the gathering of a harvest but the sowing of seeds; it is the spring rather than the autumn of preaching. If it is reflective, it is reflective so that it may be generative; if it selects and preserves and presents good sermons, it does so in order that it may help produce better sermons. If the journal should become merely an archive in which good preaching is eulogized and laid to rest, the hope of its founder, its editors and its contributors would likewise be buried. If, instead, it is a birthplace and a nursery, a genesis for the effective communication of the gospel, then what passes through it enters into life.

Note, however, that the cultivation of great sermons is not the aim of The Pulpit. Time is too short, the ways of words are too mysterious, the screen of our testings is too coarse and the will of the Holy Spirit too incalculable for us to judge the relative greatness of religious discourses. So, since great sermons, like the Holy Grail, are never awarded to a conscious quest for greatness, this journal must seek competency rather than greatness: sermons which become in the preaching situation successful communications of a valuable Christian experience; sermons which enter the lives of men as living forces and which do so because they rise in the life of the minister from a God-man event and end as they must in compelling testimony; sermons which are the instruments — in the grace of God even the foolish instruments — by which transformed personality transforms personality.

These words are being written by one who is still involved in the last weeks of his parish ministry. He sees The Pulpit entirely from the minister's viewpoint and he hopes that he will continue to do so. The man in the parish, mired in a welter of weekly obligations, knows that contemporary preaching — his preaching — is not what it should be. He may not join in the fashionable lament which sees current preaching in sharp and tragic decline. He may reason instead that the pulpit never has "this earth's foremost part" and that there has been in our time too much unjust contrasting of the general pulpiteer of today with the remembered and lauded pulpit giants of the past. Nevertheless, he must confess that his preaching is not equal to the message it transports or to the needs of those to whom that message is sent.

As a good workman he will welcome the counsel and the models which this journal can bring to him provided that they bear directly and creatively upon the spirit, the art and the technique of sermon preparation and do for him something more than burnish and ornament the weapons of his warfare. He will consider with profit the notices and reviews which direct him to the best materials available for the nourishing of his prophetic spirit and the nurturing of his power to communicate the gospel to the troubled minds, the harassed lives and the hungry hearts of his parishioners.

The staff of this journal will be pleased if it can in some significant way give aid to this man and it will therefore be fashioned, not in the ivory tower, but on this ground where "the old, old story" is proclaimed again in all the newness which this age demands, the ground where men speak to men for "their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation."

KYLE HASELDEN

The Absence And the Event of God

By J. Edward Dirks

And John, calling to him two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" . . . And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at me." Luke 7:19, 22, 23.

THE portrait we have of this first-century, strange, rough and adult man John is very vivid. Wherever he breaks in upon the New Testament scene, his is a disturbing presence. He explodes from wilderness crudity to point the way toward a resolution of the plot which has seemingly gotten entangled beyond any hope of human solution. In Matthew's Gospel his first appearance jolts us. An atmosphere of wonder had been created by the story of a glorious birth, the miraculous splendor of a star, the sweet angelic music for sleepy shepherds on a hillside. Then all this beauty and joy and certainty is shattered by an interruption, the intrusion upon the scene of this sober, responsible, mature man, breathing words of warning and violence, promising vision with repentance. In Luke's account, acts of mercy and healing, the dispelling of disease and plague and evil — events which give evidence of a new age — are all cast suddenly to one side.

The light shifts to an infested dungeon and a prison cell. Here is John, not cracking his knuckles or muttering about the dirty breaks he has received. Instead, bewildering us with his credulity, he is turning his disciples into an investigating committee. He sends two of them on an errand of inquiry with an impertinent question born in an improper place. "Go to Jesus and ask him," says John, " 'Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?' " "Are you what is ahead for us, the meaning and destiny of our lives, or must we look elsewhere? Are you he upon whom our lives turn, or must our verdict be empty nothingness? Are you the present one and the coming one, the wave of our future, what we must also be, or must we continue on desert roads? For you are not the Lord of history; you are not the hinge of life's ultimate meaning, you cannot provide us a clue to final trust and loyalty — unless you are Lord of all that is yet to come!"

J. Edward Dirks *is Stephen Merrell Clement Professor of Christian Methods at Yale University Divinity School, whose faculty he joined in 1955 after six years as professor of philosophy and religion at Lake Forest College. Dr. Dirks has been active in the American Student Christian Movement and the World Student Christian Movement and is well known for his leadership in the field of religion and higher education.*

An Impertinent Quest

This is a mission arising out of urgent and mature search, expressed in words that border on impertinence. Can such questioning be taken seriously in a university? Here we are challenged to live for the sake of the quest itself; we ask questions in order to know. Can we respect the questions which are urgently asked in order to live?

We do know, do we not, that we need to find some meaning — something trustworthy — in it all, in our life, our world, our history. Increased knowledge and skill have not yet sustained us against the immense indifference of the world. They have dispelled illusion, broken bondage to superstition and ignorance, brought some light and immense power. But they have not, and cannot, assure us that this is our home, that the world is for us who are in exile here, that there is somehow, somewhere a coherence between our quest for understanding and the way things actually are. We can weigh the colossal forces of nature, whether concentrated in massive deposits of power or in wings of butterflies; we can mathematically compute the syntax in the relations of facts and forces and events. But we continue to ask questions which seek understanding by which we can live; we know we cannot live only in order to know.

Must we then turn aside from questions which characterize our inquiries in universities and become wholly devoted to John's investigation? Some traditional theology might well answer: "Yes, one thing only is needful, a saving, personal knowledge

of God in Christ; with it a man has everything, and without it nothing! All truth is already here, or it is not to be found in any of the branches of knowledge." Such a reply is like fuel added to the self-engulfing flames of an ignorant and immature church. It is reinforcement for a vulgar society. It is theology's last-ditch defense in the wrong ditch.

We need to give voice to our ultimate questions about meaning and trust and loyalty. Unless we ask them, we can take nothing but cold comfort from our knowledge and we can find nothing but loneliness in our power. But let us not in the name of Christianity smuggle in some traditional formula which would turn every significant concern into a religious quest, which would outlaw the propriety of what is secular, which would reassure us in speculative systems which carry no continuing conviction. We cannot be expected to jump with glee over the return of a few absolutes offered us in the name of mystery and authority, when by our knowledge we know that we may have at best only an "expectant relativity."

Permeating Passion

The dilemma which we suffer is not to be solved by any kind of pathetic return to a secure past in ecclesiastical heteronomy or metaphysical overview. It is subject to some solution only by our rugged determination to ask two continuing types of questions, and each in relation to the other: those which at best preoccupy a university, and those which serve to nurture vitality in the church. The knowledge that supports life meaningfully is integral to all living quests for knowledge which is the source of power. And the spirit of living in order to know must, likewise, be a passion that permeates the knowledge by which life itself is supported. Both types of questions must be asked. The immensities of space invite us to travel; they are also the occasions for deepening loneliness. When we confront an apparently irreducible particle, we are challenged to effect one more fission; but the historical in us has added to it another burden of insecurity. The constancy of change, everything in motion, the explosion of all expanses — these are dynamics in biological, social and solar systems. But beyond them we still seek some fulcrum in space, some cosmos unthreatened by chaos, some awakening of spirit to an abiding presence, some assurance in our uncertainty of what is yet to come.

Each of us is caught up in a two-sided search, since we want to know in order to live as well as to live in order to know. So too for the church and the university. We must seek the power which knowledge brings, because intricately interwoven into the creation itself there is the presentiment that man's God-given commission is that of man's dominion over the world. Knowledge even for power is a part of man's response to his God-given task. But this may be undertaken only in these terms: man as a responsible creature, as one who receives his life, its meaning, his vocation. Man is free for dominion of the world. But he is not God. To seek his meaning only as maker and controller is to increase the intensity of his futility. To seek his meaning as creature is to discover the breathing space we need for personal life.

Unobvious Presence

What we are saying is that the world by God's action has become truly historical. It has become the place of man's responsible care; he is the heir who has come of age, whose care it is to make history. He is set free to ask all the questions. The only guard upon him is that he must know that he receives his life, his world, his meaning. And, in order that we may ask whence we receive, God has made himself absent from the world. He has remade himself, eclipsed himself, and is not entangled with the world's things. This we insist upon by our confession that we live in a created order, transcended by God. We often take a kind of pride in interpreting the absence of God from the standpoint of our self-centeredness. But we have not expelled him. He has made himself unobvious, not because of our sin but because he is God, the Holy One, Creator and Lord. And his absence is in order that the world may be sheer world, that we may discover the freedom and responsibility to be creatures with the commission of its dominion. It is the withdrawal, not the murder, of God which signifies his absence. We need now no longer have a kind of vested interest in him — we Christians bent upon apology! — feeling ourselves under obligation to prove his existence, clinging to bits of logic and evidence for him, in a kind of anxiety lest if we ceased talking about him, he would vanish away.

This absence, required for true science, the awareness of which in the doctrine of Creation lies behind the advances in empirical sciences — this same absence is essential also if we are to ask about God's return, the event of his coming. This may sound like a verbal trick, but it cannot be helped. Only the believer can finally make the atheist's assertion. Unfaith and faith go together. The assurance which is by faith is only to be found in the possibility of doubt. In faith the assurance can be ours that the world is open to the future. We can be called to live in the present in the strength of the future.

How then may the event of God's coming actually occur? By what course do our answers come? In part by a candid realism, a kind of impertinence, a rough maturity, an acceptance of our coming of age. We are defiant that not all is lucid and congruent. We do resent the fact that there is no absolute anchorage for the human enterprise in our

(Continued on page 18)

WHAT IS A CHURCH

THE CHIEF danger to the church school is not that it is being overshadowed by a vast nonreligious public school system but that its teachers and its leadership too often settle for education of the public school variety instead of for religious education. This danger comes from the intertwining of two laudable ideas of our time: the Progressive movement with its sound realization that "education is life" and the Christian concern, equally important, about "the setting-apart of religion from the common life." There is a tendency for the two to become indistinguishable. Education of the secular kind, by virtue of its creed "the whole child in the total environment" is not only embracing more "services" in behalf of youth, but also treating more aspects of the self and personality. There is a school of measurement in education that sums up learning as, ultimately, a change in behavior, and defines the good teacher as one trained to detect growth in character by the skillful observation of children's daily conduct. There would seem to be little left for a church school to do.

On the other hand, when the church school wishes to extend Christ into all phases of one's existence — what one spends for a dress, how one perceives one's social class, how one wins TV prizes, whom one honors — religion easily becomes identified with human relations, peace of mind or with nice boys and girls having a nice time.

Is there any difference, then, between the function of the ideal public school teacher who belongs to a church and that of the ideal religious teacher? There must be thousands of public school teachers who also teach in Sunday schools. What, presumably, do they do, or should they do, that is different when they move over into a church school? Is there only a shift in subject matter, from Jane Eyre to Ruth, from Lancelot to David, from American history to Hebrew history, from Socrates to Christ, from Emerson's Compensation to the Beatitudes? It may be worthwhile to explore what the difference is.

GEORGE H. HENRY, *professor of education at the University of Delaware, has had several years' experience as a secondary school educator. He is the author of a number of articles appearing in national publications and of the textbook "Short Stories for Our Times." Dr. Henry is a member of various educational societies and a prominent figure on his state's educational scene. He is a graduate of Temple University and Columbia University Teachers College.*

I

Many public school teachers give countless hours of advice to youth on intimate concerns relating to their peers, their parents and their careers, and many lie awake nights devising ways to extricate a delinquent from a degrading home life. Most of these teachers probably are motivated more by the scientific study of child growth than by contemplating the Cross. I know a junior high school faculty, to which I was a consultant, that literally was assuming the burden of guilt for boys and girls who were failing, for whose conditions, it seemed, the parents, the city council, the board of education and the professed Christians of the community were largely to blame. As a high school teacher I found myself being called upon by pupils at odd moments of the night to talk through a bleak, well-nigh hopeless situation. As a regular part of their teaching preparation, teachers learn the techniques of guiding and counseling youth in the deepest conflicts arising from wrongdoing, a function reserved in the past for the confessional or the preparation for the Protestant communion.

But none of this concern is written into the contract. The teacher can hold his job without doing much of it, can even rank as excellent without doing any of it. Nor is it part of the community's expectation of the teacher. It depends on the teacher's private vision of his task. The church school teacher, on the other hand, must have a vision of his task far transcending guidance, and far above his ability to teach; it is a vision not of his making, or of his community's, or of public authority: it is a vision of perfect sacrifice. He must deal ultimately with the existential person, not with his I. Q., his talent, his scholastic achievement. "For the human being is above knowledge, above reason, above the school." His teaching is more than helping a youth relate himself to the

By George H. Henry

SCHOOL FOR?

cosmos, more than bringing into being an emergent philosophy of life. It is a certain kind of experience with God that Christians believe necessary for their richest living. The public school teacher is relieved of teaching this quality of experience despite the public school's claims to teach "the whole child in the whole environment." He cannot carry out this promise even in secular terms; he does not even know what the slogan means.

Though the church school teacher has no mandate like "the whole child in the whole environment," he seldom envisions the freedom that he possesses, which goes far beyond that of the public school teacher. The church school can be free of the glittering optimism that is warp and woof of the public school curriculum, free of the immediate pressure of society, for instance, of an Admiral Rickover's "education for survival." In addition, the church school teacher is loosened from assignments, grades, examinations, and can thus go straight to the vision of the Cross. He is free from herding, from political red tape, from extreme heterogeneity in a class, because he works within a single denominational faith. It is a dangerous kind of freedom because without Christ as the norm the church school sinks into something worse than secular education. The mere absence of religion is not secularism; education emanating from secularism is based on a theory of mind, a theory of man, an analysis of aims. What public school can be as detrimental as a church school that is without this kind of underpinning, and does not try deliberately to relate Christ to the ordinary choices of youth?

Despite the "soundness" of its pedagogical method, the public school has incredible gaps in its curriculum, though it purports to embrace life. Go from classroom to classroom in the public schools across the land and such words as anguish, sorrow, commitment, suffering, sacrifice, humility, sin, awe, death are seldom heard. Who explores these in depth for youth? When the needs theory of creating a curriculum was at its height, the course-makers seldom planned to confront youth with the above immemorial concepts. Instead, they are explained away by sociograms, mental health and getting along. One everywhere hears high school seniors discuss political, economic and social forces and problems without once having their inbred values — materialism, success, competition — pierced. Who is making pupils aware of the ideas that hold them captive? Who examines for them the jingoism within the American Way, the assumptions of the business creed, the morality of scientism, the sociological base of getting along? The public school, a prisoner of the public philosophy, has not seen fit to do this, except when occasionally some teacher, inspired by a vision of a higher democracy or by outside Christian influences, takes a chance at martyrdom all on his own. In short, the church school teacher has more leeway in getting at truth and a deeper grip on the human condition than the public school teacher, for the former has a Cross to help youth break through their own mores.

II

Why do so many religious leaders, therefore, wish that religious instruction be a part of public education? Suppose, as Father McCluskey seems to hope (at a conference of the American Council of Education), the leading religions of America would be able to rally around a theistic God and thus work out a common denominator of values to guide public school instruction: I doubt whether Christians would be as happy about the arrangement as they now believe they would be. Within the public school the vision of the Cross would lack the conditions necessary for its own fulfillment. A taxpayer is different from a tither, and a business-dominated board of education is even different from a business majority on the board of trustees of a church. Would not the Cross succumb more readily than it does in the church school to nationalism, patriotism, manifest destiny, the motley fellow travelers of the free world? The church may pay a frightful price for seeking aid from the state school, now permeated with secularism, pluralism, liberalism and rationalism.

Secularism, indeed, in its full sense implies a recourse to primitive homogeneity in its inability, to date, to make use of anything but an all-per-

suasive mystical nationalism as a unifier. The loose pluralism of secularism must be sustained somehow, and what seems left today but a nation's borders, its flag, its blood, to hold together antagonistic groups — its irreconcilables like Protestantism, Catholicism and Hebraism? Pluralism today means a multiplicity of voluntary pressure groups (often undemocratic within) out of whose self-centered exertions truth or "balance" emerges; it no longer means a host of institutions compartmentalized as the Victorians thought society to be, with religion but one area of life, the school another area of life, with even economics set apart from politics. Neither fiction — balance or compartments — can be maintained today. No intelligent man, let alone Christian, can be happy either about the truth of nationalism as supreme unifier or about compartmentalizing religion and education.

For a while, liberalism seemed the synthesis of the two. But liberalism could never formulate a creed to live by, as Theodore Green points out in *Liberalism, Its Theory and Practice.* At best liberalism has been a watchdog of civil liberties, a freer of intelligence (for who knows what?), a critic of all affronts to human dignity; but it has little to say about how this commitment is gained, what its positive values are and on what they are grounded. It has no way of changing a man except through state education, which is now calling a feeble tune of liberation.

Sociologically, then, the church school must, if it is to be Christian, use the Cross as a means of giving youth a glimpse above the current culture in order to assist them to appraise or understand it.

III

But this accomplishment would be as nothing if the church school did not examine the psychology of its own religious process which is to serve as the foundation of its kind of education. Just as the ancient Greeks had a Socratic method to engender wisdom, just as the analyst has a method to deal with neurology and just as Dewey attempted to outline a method of thinking for a scientific age, so the church school has a method at hand to transform the self of its pupils. It is a process wherein means and ends merge. This kind of education, unique to Christianity, assumes this sequence: sin, guilt, confession, repentance, forgiveness, redemption, renewal. Paradoxically, the more skillful we are at it, the less it aids us. Who pretends to be an authority on redemption? Who, whether theologian or pope, learns to pray better than another through practice? The church school teacher cannot expect mastery of it in the public school sense. "Success" in this kind of education becomes the subtle qualitative shading between two motives for the same act — lust or love, manipulation or sincerity, being sorry or contrite. The church school must teach youth that this method helps him be and do what his reason, guided by Christ-as-norm, sociologically speaking, directs him to be and do.

Should the Supreme Court ever rule that the Constitution permit the teaching of religion in the public schools and should the various religions of America agree on what about God and man ought to be taught, this inclusion of religion into the curriculum may be a further deterioration of Christianity, given the present conditions of state-supported schools. On the other hand, the church school, relatively free of these conditions, and thus in a more favorable position to do its own task, is abusing its freedom by settling for less than its high purpose; on the psychological side becoming little more than mental hygiene and, on the sociological side, hardly more than a reinforcement to slogans like survival, democratic faith and economic progress.

IV

Those clergy who continually lament that religion is not being taught in our schools are often the very ones who fail to see what a citadel of high criticism the church might be in our democracy: it seems to be the only place left, really, that has the autonomy (if it is accepted!) to challenge basic policies of a garrison democracy. None of the great state universities can do this; the whole academic world must rely only on the single, courageous professor because even the academic disciplines, though national and fraternal in form and association — politics, science, sociology, psychology, philosophy, etc. — have so far neither the vitality nor the courage to do so. Only such *church groups* as the General Board of the National Council of Churches or the Catholic bishops, following where their Christianity takes them, have chosen to oppose the melting down of secularism into nationalism.

Because of its roots in the 18th century, modern democracy has come to regard criticisms from the church as hostile to its principle of objective truth. But overlooked is the reverse: the democratic nation absorbing all religions by its expedient use of sovereignty. Even in the ancient theocracy of Israel there grew up an institution of the prophets above king and temple that passed judgment on both, on foreign policy and the ways of the people, and at the end even transcended race and nation in the name of the God of the Nations. The church school could be that place where the fusion of patriotism and religion are fearlessly examined in the light of Christ. It surely cannot be done in the public schools.

The plight of youth in America today is that they are seldom given a vantage ground for critical thinking — much needed for preserving a democracy and for self-renewal — either by the public schools, that cannot, or by the church schools, that will not.

Words Spoken as an Insult Became His Highest Praise

"He Saved Others"

By Herbert Beecher Hudnut

He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. Matthew 27:42.

ON Good Friday we listen sorrowfully to the words from the cross: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Then, when the strident words to the cross break the spell of our sorrow, we become angry, angry at the stupid, cruel ones who cried against Jesus: "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

Anger comes naturally to us because we rebel against mobs. We are angry with these inhabitants of Jerusalem because of their spinelessness and vindictiveness. They are a reflection of what we see in our own lives. Are we not all cowards when popular opinion runs opposite to ours? Are not the insights after the storm far more rational than those which drive us in the midst of the storm's fury?

At any rate, after centuries have passed, men are now able to look more calmly at the cross of Jesus and at the men who either blessed or cursed him — for instance, at the revilers on the public roadway, passing by the cross and wagging their heads. Listen to their taunts: "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" "Save Thyself!" "He saved others, himself he cannot save!" Their cries have been called the third mocking. The first came when the servants of the High Priest mocked him before he was condemned. We can scarcely bear to read the lines: "They did spit in his face, and buffeted him and others smote him with the palms of their hands." Secondly, the soldiers mocked him after he had been sentenced to die. They put a scarlet robe about him, a farcical scepter in his hand and a crown of thorns on his head. Then they mocked him and spit upon him and took the reed and struck him on the head.

Pause now and consider this outright hostility to the Lord Jesus Christ. How blind they were! How unspeakably callous and bitter! How cruel to lay their hands on the Master who had never harmed them. Indeed, he had come to their world only to bring them salvation. Perhaps we are outraged at their conduct so that we may overlook our own. True, we haven't done the things they did, but we have been indifferent when we should have been zealous; uncaring when we should have been mightily concerned; afar off when we should have been near him. A merely perfunctory loyalty or an indifference may be harder for Christ to bear than outright hostility. There is little use to read the Gospel narrative of the crucifixion unless we use it as a mirror to reflect the sin in our own souls which crucified Jesus — to ask ourselves the age-old question, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" and, if so, what role did you play?

The third mocking was by a crowd of passers-by and partly — I am ashamed to say this — by the religious leaders of that day, the chief priests, scribes and elders. Who were these men? They were accustomed to rule, honored by the people, leaders in worship at the synagogue and temple, expounders of the truth and interpreters of the law. Why were they so antagonistic toward Jesus? Because he posed a threat to their neat little scheme of things. They had everything all worked out with a proper syllogism for every problem, and then Jesus came along and upset their plans. They were sticklers for their ancient laws. Jesus acknowledged the validity of these, but he gave them a higher law, introducing that law with these words: "But *I* say unto you." One of their chief tenets was the sacredness of the Sabbath Day. They would restrict man so that he had no freedom at all. Jesus came, giving man freedom, and telling the priests that their Sabbath was made for man. In other words, man is to be as free as the wind of heaven, subject only to the spiritual discipline of Almighty God.

Jesus took away some of the honor and glory of

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the scribes and elders by his wonder-working power. People wanted to touch the hem of his garment, not theirs! They were avoided because they were too austere and self-centered, too preoccupied with mint, anise and cumin to be interested in the weightier matters that troubled the people. Again, the common people heard Jesus gladly, not them! For there was no joy in their message. Oh, it was there all right, in the blessed Word of God, but obscured by their proverbial long-facedness. When Jesus was in the community there was good-natured good humor, the lightheartedness of children at play, the absence of fear and the glory of the rising sun "rejoicing as a strong man to run his race." And people were seeking the truth. They wanted truth untrammeled, unobscured. The scribes and Pharisees were often entangled by their lengthy interpretations and arguments about truth. The difference between Jesus' words and their opinions was as evident as the difference between a clear expressway and a cluttered alley.

An Obvious Failure

Why did they taunt him with these words, "He saved others; himself he cannot save"? Why did they revile him when they saw his blood-spattered shoulders, his pierced hands and feet, his agonized face, his wracked and broken body? I think they were trying to justify themselves in the face of this awful thing that they had done. Jesus' humiliation on the cross, they thought, proved that they had been right all along. Lord indeed! Messiah indeed! Son of God indeed! These claims which he had made for himself, these names by which he had been hailed by the populace, were preposterous in the face of the evidence before their very eyes. A fitting end to the wonder-worker! An end to his blasphemous speech! "He claimed he could save others. He can't even help himself in this extremity." So his cross, the symbol of vicarious sacrifice to his disciples, was for them the sign of his complete and abject failure.

The world has had a long time to ponder these words which were hurled as maledictions against the helpless Christ, which rolled against the black skies of Calvary and which have echoed down through the centuries so that we can hear them even now. "He saved others; himself he cannot save." What do we make of them?

First of all, these words spoken as a jibe have remained his highest compliment. "He saved others" has been echoed in love by countless thousands of his followers ever since. The insult has become praise. So God turns the evil machinations of men to work his praise.

Secondly, the words imply that his enemies thought Jesus had no power to save himself. How wrong they were! How little they really knew about him! How stupidly they misjudged him! For here was the Son of God to whom had been given all power in heaven and earth. Here was the Lord of the universe with the four winds in his left hand and the lightning bolts in his right. Here was the Lord of peace,

> Whose power the sceptre sways
> From pole to pole, that wars may cease,
> Absorbed in prayer and praise.

And here was God's heir, at whose word the legions of heaven would have been unleashed to effect his rescue. But there was silence on the cross and they thought this to be a sign of impotence. We know that it wasn't an impossibility for Christ to save himself. It was an improbability. It wasn't that he *could* not do it, but rather that he *would* not.

Third, the words admit Jesus' saving power for others: "He saved others." They had to grant, even against their will, that he had healed the minds and bodies of men, even of the least of God's creatures — the sick, the halt, the blind, the lepers, the moral outcasts, the publicans and sinners, yes, and he did not hesitate in his attempt to save the rich — the young ruler, the hated Zacchaeus, the proud Nicodemus and the wealthy Simon. Not only was he adequate with his resources for human need, but he was willing to stop and answer any cry from life's roadside. We believe this to be forever true. Cry unto him in your need and he will respond!

Perfect Tribute

Finally, the words highlight the necessity of sacrifice in salvation. The Rev. W. M. Clow of Glasgow says that it must be a willing sacrifice, it must have a worthy purpose and it must be impelled by love. A safety patrol boy at a Detroit street corner rushing into the path of a speeding car to save a six-year-old girl, a chaplain risking his life to bring in a wounded soldier under fire, Madame Curie and her daughter giving their lives that radium might be more effective in the cure of disease — these fulfill the first condition: eager consent of the will to save others. The disciples, writing about the death of their Lord, and wanting to express in simplest fashion their thought about him, put it in these words: "He gave his Life." That was the perfect tribute. He did not seek for security first, he did not try to find avenues of escape, he did not cringe before his executioners. No, — and this is the glory of the crucifixion — our Lord Jesus Christ, for us men and for our salvation, gave his life.

There was in Jesus' sacrifice a worthy purpose. The mind of man could not conceive it, but "the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." There are many instances of the unworthy sacrifice: giving one's life to build barns and more barns so that the fool can say to his soul, "Take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry"; slaving away one's health so that his chil-

dren may live on easy street; these are unworthy sacrifices.

Self-sacrifice can be glorious when it springs from a high and noble purpose: when a community resolves to rid itself of slums, regardless of the cost; when Elizabeth Barrett Browning dares to speak out and act, risking censure to aid the working children of England, starting a reform that has swept around the world; when a statesman, businessman, doctor, preacher or laborer sacrifices his job or career for the sake of a deep conviction or for his enlistment in some great cause — when these occur we realize how supremely great is the sacrifice. But when men willingly give their lives, like the five martyr-missionaries in Peru, to win the souls of savages; when missionaries, moved by the Spirit of God, go to the ends of the earth to further his Kingdom; when our Lord carried his cross to Golgotha and willingly submitted to that awful death — then and then only do we realize what the words mean: "He saved others."

Impelled by Love

Sacrifices must be impelled by love. Only then is it a perfect sacrifice as Paul suggests: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, I am nothing." As you study the life of Jesus, close your eyes and see him in his daily walk and conversation, healing the sick, ministering to sorrowing hearts, cleansing lepers, freeing the enslaved, pardoning sinners, dispelling fears, holding children in his arms, praising John the Baptist, rejoicing over souls won for God, weeping over a nonrepentant city. In each incident recorded by the evangelist — even when he took a whip and drove the moneychangers from the temple — in each place, in each teaching, in each act we can see the love of God revealed by the Son, the all-encompassing, loving-kindness which, entering the lifestream of a stricken humanity, will save it to the glory of God.

"I lay down my life myself, no man taketh it from me." "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer." He died for the noblest purpose ever conceived, that all of his brethren might be redeemed. When we stand at the foot of the cross we are in the presence of an infinite mystery, but if we come in faith we will find the burden of our sins removed, even as Pilgrim found in Bunyan's great story *Pilgrim's Progress:*

> Now I saw in my dream, that the highway up which Christian was to go was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.
>
> He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending, and upon that place stood a cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulcher. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up to the cross, his burden loosed from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulcher, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.
>
> Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said, with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death." Then he stood still awhile to look and wonder; for it was very surprising to him, that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till the springs that were in his head sent the waters down his cheeks. Now, as he stood looking and weeping, behold three Shining Ones came to him and saluted him with "Peace be to thee." So the first said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him "with change of raiment," the third also set a mark on his forehead and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bade him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the Celestial Gate. So they went their way.

This is the meaning of the words "He saved others." It is meaningful for us. He saves men today. He is the Savior of the world. We too may be numbered among the faithful. We too must climb the steep ascent of Calvary, there to have our burden lifted and there to say in wholehearted appreciation and simple devotion:

> Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> That were a present far too small,
> Love so amazing, so divine,
> Shall have my soul, my life, my all.

Good Friday Prayer

ALMIGHTY Father, with mingled emotions we stand before the cross on Calvary. Our spirits sink as we recall the death of the Master and see again the drama of that day: the jeering soldiers, the smugness of the scribes, the muteness of the crowd, the pain and death of the hour. Allow us not to be deceived as to where we would have stood had we been in Jerusalem that day, we who betray and mock Him with unfaithful hands and doubting hearts. May the memory of the day and deed pass silent judgment upon our lives.

Yet, O God, our spirits move to new heights at the sight of thy love woven into the tragedy of this day. Here we discover the depth of thy desire for fellowship with man; that judgment comes as the agent of creation. Grant that we may be quick to act upon these insights for the sake of our own souls. As the shadow of the cross falls over this season of the year, show us the truth about ourselves. Enable us to be caught by the power of the event, so that dying with Him we may know the joy of being raised to a new life. We ask it in the spirit of Christ. Amen. — *Carl F. Schultz, Jr., Plymouth Congregational Church, Plymouth, N.H.*

The Inescapable Theme

By Charles C. Knapp

IT HAS been said that in grandfather's day the topic of religion was acceptable while the topic of sex was taboo, but that in our time sex is acceptable while religion is taboo.

As with most generalizations, this is scarcely the whole truth. Even so, there has been a change of climate surrounding the matter of sex. The average person is probably less self-conscious with a book about sex tucked under his arm than he would be carrying a Bible! Sex is no longer a topic beyond the discussion of polite people. What used to be confined to whispered conversations is now pronounced from public rostrums. The anatomy, psychology, problems, implications of sex have all been brought into the open. This is the era of Freudian analysis, Kinsey reports and marriage manuals. Our more advanced public schools provide courses introducing grade school children to the mysteries of the human body. Congregations expect their ministers to provide premarital counseling for their young people. Youth societies include in their programs discussions of dating, sex relationships and courtship behavior. Any individual can avail himself of literature in public libraries and bookstores which will provide him with information necessary to his needs on the subject of sex.

As any experienced counselor will attest, however, there is still a dismaying amount of ignorance with regard to sex, both prior to and within marriage. This should not surprise us because, despite all the books and talk about religion, there is a great deal of religious ignorance; despite all the newspapers and newscasts, there is widespread ignorance about human affairs and issues. Nevertheless, probably never before have so many people in all age groups known as much about sex as they do today. The conscientious parent who undertakes to instruct his child in the elements of sex might be reminded of the story of the first graders who were talking to one another during recess. Their subject was space travel. One of them said to the other, "I am concerned about the possible physiological effects of the cosmic rays and what this might present as a limiting factor." But the other said, "It seems to me that a more basic problem is the psychological impact of the sense of isolation." Just then the school bell summoned the youngsters back to class, and the first youngster closed their conversation with this: "Well, I guess we have to go back and string those confounded beads." Today's parent ought not to be surprised when he tells his child that he would like to discuss sex, to have his child respond, "OK with me — what do you want to know?"

Speaking personally, this change of climate is for the most part sound and healthy. I welcome the candor, the honesty, the frankness with which this subject may be dealt in our day. Nothing is to be gained by a return to a policy of ignorance and repression, even if that were possible.

Slipping into Idolatry

It is one thing, however, to be candid about sex and quite another to be preoccupied with it. Honesty is necessary but not public exploitation. A sound appreciation of the significance of sex is acceptable but not a fascination with it. When preoccupation, exploitation and fascination loom large, then sex is in danger of being distorted in the minds of people. Its exceeding value and significance undergo a process of divination, and we slip publicly into a kind of idolatry.

There are symptoms in our society which indicate that something of the sort may have taken place. Sex has become an inescapable theme, whatever the medium of communication one might refer to: newspapers, radio, TV, advertising, slick magazines, paper backs or the so-called comics. It is hardly possible in our time to sell soap or music, tooth paste or hair cream, without the aid of some appeal below the conscious level to the libidinal urge. Sex is all too often "the hidden persuader" and not too well-hidden at that. In the field of pop-

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ular entertainment, Hollywood has foisted upon the American public a romantic and emotional interpretation of sex that is not only false in its overemphasis but as unstable as a jelly mold. Many of the popular figures in the field of entertainment follow a way of life that is a by-product of their interpretation of sex: they live in a sort of legalized concubinage. They present a concept of sex that is devoid of social responsibility. The result, in part, has been the progressive instability of the American home, to the point that divorce has become one of our major problems. All too often it is a convenient form of escape from situations that call for maturity. The fact that there are twelve million children in this country who live without benefit of both parents is some indication of the immensity of the problem.

Deadly Game

There are other straws in the wind. Preoccupation with sex has become more intensive in that age bracket which, because of extreme youth and incomplete vocational training, is not yet prepared to bear the responsibilities of marriage and the home. The phenomenon of teen-age marriage is of concern to us all, particularly when so many of them end in failure. One cannot escape the impression that in the high schools across the country sex has become little short of a deadly game. One is impressed by the seriousness with which relationships between the sexes are cultivated: instead of being relaxed, they are tense; instead of gaiety, there is earnestness. Parents must wrestle with the implications of "going steady" and "going steadily"; they have discovered that it is almost impossible to invite a group of boys and girls to a party and expect them to have a good time on their own. They will not come unless their "steady" is also invited, with the result that the couples are so intent upon one another, there is no mixing. It is not unusual to see our young people stand around and look at one another, obviously bored, rather than run the risk of losing their freedom by a premature commitment. I cannot help but add that while they think their parents "don't understand" what it is all about, their parents knew how to make a good time of such an opportunity in their day. Psychologically, the present situation has a great deal in it to be corrected.

Historically speaking, the idolatry of sex was expressed in the nature religions of the ancient world. In Egypt it was the worship of Isis, the great mother; in Babylon the goddess was Ishtar; in Assyria her name was Astarte. In each instance the goddess represented the productivity of nature, whose worship was necessary to guarantee the annual harvest. Worship involved a process of imitative magic in the form of sexual immoralities, with the attendant sacred prostitution and kindred ceremonies.

In the Old Testament these various nature deities were referred to by the generic term, Baal. Each of Israel's neighbors had its particular Baal, but the common denominator of worship was the same. Between the religion of Israel and the cults that surrounded her was a sharp and striking contrast: the religion of Israel had to do with righteousness, social responsibility, community welfare and justice; the religions of her neighbors were sensuous, emotional and exciting, with nothing in the way of moral content. The result was a temptation and conflict. William Graham Cole in his study of *Sex and Love in the Bible* writes this: "Orgies involving the use of intoxicants and indiscriminate sexual activity played an important part in these cults, and many Israelites gladly became apostates to these weird and wondrous deities. . . . The inexperience of the nomadic Hebrews . . . made them easy converts to the local Baals who promised good harvests. The exotic character of the cult with its mystic roots . . . together with the highly sensual pleasures afforded in the worship, combined to make it an attractive type of religious experience." Then Cole adds, with tongue in cheek, "Any such temple in modern society would encounter no difficulty in attracting large numbers of devotees, though it is doubtful if it could qualify under the rubric guaranteeing freedom of religion!"[1]

The Problem Remains

This then is the background of that great encounter between Elijah and the prophets of Baal in the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. Having assembled his people at Mt. Carmel, Elijah flung out the challenge to them: "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The very intensity and savagery of the resulting struggle indicates the fundamental difference between a religion of nature with the enthronement of sex and the religion of history with the enthronement of the Lord God. Elijah was victorious that day, but the issue was not settled for all time. It continues into the present. The forms and appearances have changed, but the problem remains.

The idolatry of sex in our time is the distortion of sex in whatever form that distortion may take. It involves its misuse, its misunderstanding, its exploitation. It often isolates sex from social responsibility and from the related concerns of personality. All of this was involved in the fertility cults of the ancient world. What men and women have done since then is simply to change the forms under which a similar misuse and misunderstanding is practiced.

Sex is idolatrous when it sacrifices the personality of the other. Sex, truly understood, as it is

[1] William Graham Cole, *Sex and Love in the Bible* (New York: Association Press, 1959). Used by permission.

understood in the Bible, is a means by which the self-giving love of two persons mutually enhances, honors and elevates the personality. As such it is one of the greatest gifts of God. In this regard the Bible has often been misunderstood. Sex in the Judaeo-Christian tradition is neither evil nor subspiritual. It is to be received as the work and the will of God and therefore good. Within the context of self-giving love, of social responsibility, of the realization that all of life is sacred, the sexual relationship is a creative and renewing benediction.

In its lesser manifestations, sex is lifted out of this context. It becomes an end in itself without regard for the person. Thus, prostitution degrades personality for the sake of pleasure on the one hand, and money on the other; the infidelity of husband or wife throws the well-being of marriage and the home into jeopardy with its inevitable damage to the personalities of all involved; sexual experimentations and adventures and premarital relationships all involve to some degree a threat to personal well-being. Wherever sex is exploited and used without regard for the person and his striving for maturity and fulfillment, whether in cheap literature, pseudo-art or entertainment, then it has become idolatrous. Where sex is thought of and elevated above the concerns of personality, the individual as an end in himself, then it is misused.

Major Confusion

Further, whenever sex is made the synonym of love, then it has become idolatrous. This acceptance of sex and love as synonymous seems to me to be one of the greatest confusions of our time. Love, truly defined, is not primarily emotional. It is of the will. It is less concerned with the self than with the one who is loved; it is expressed in self-giving, in regard for the other, in that kind of responsible behavior which is rooted in the mind and in the will. Impelled by love in these terms, sex is one of the many ways by which love is expressed. Sex is thus preserved in its true context, without distortion and misunderstanding.

Unfortunately, love in our time has been given another content of meaning entirely. "From Tin Pan Alley to Hollywood," writes Cole, "from the sudsy studios which purvey the steady stream of soap operas across the waves of sight and sound to the publishing houses and their output of novels and slick magazine fiction, from the higher brows of Broadway to the even loftier foreheads of the European intelligentsia, poor old Eros has been beaten, bedraggled, and bedeviled until he is no longer recognizable. Love is mawkish, emotional, sentimental, and is constantly coming and going. As one child recently observed concerning the current popular songs, 'In all of them someone is either falling in love or out of love. No one ever seems to stay put!' "[2] Thus do we equate love with emotion and emotion with sex. And in so doing, we lose sight of those dimensions of love which have to do with concern for the other, with responsibility, with emotional maturity, with self-giving, that is, with those qualities in our relationships which make them stable, creative and productive.

What is the Christian answer to the idolatry of sex in our time? From the point of view of some, Christianity has little to offer. And I for one would be the first to acknowledge that Christianity of the puritanical and negative sort offers little. Our performance in this area of human life has left much to be desired.

Glad Acceptance

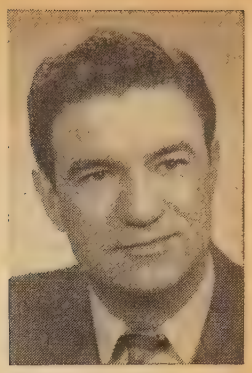
But if we turn to the source book of Christian thinking, to the Bible, and search it with open eyes and unprejudiced hearts, we will find much there that we never suspected to be there. For one thing, we will find in the Bible a glad acceptance of sex as a gift of God. Whether it is in the Song of Songs in the Old Testament, the implications of Jesus' attitudes in the Gospels or Paul's discussions rightly understood, there is an affirmation of sex as essentially good, as something within the will and purpose of God, as one of man's great blessings. In this sense, the Old and New Testament Scriptures are a frank revelation of life in all of its phases. One quality the Bible does not possess is prudishness.

Furthermore, added to this affirmation is understanding and tenderness. All too frequently in the history of human thought, the sins related to sex have received the severest censure and condemnation. In our churches it is probably still easier to forgive pride, gossip, anger and sloth than it is to forgive infidelity. But in the Gospels, this order is reversed. To the woman taken in adultery Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more"; some of the kindest words Jesus ever expressed were to those who sinned in the area of sex while his most stringent words were directed to the self-righteous and to those who did not know what it meant to love. The point is that in the Gospels the grace of God is most evident where human nature is oftentimes weakest.

Finally, in the Bible we will find that the sexual phase of life — as all other phases of life — is brought under the sovereignty of God. Or, as we would express it in Christian terms, under the lordship of Christ. The implication is that all of life is sacred; all of it belongs to God. Thus, we are the stewards of God from whom we have received gifts and responsibilities to be used for the enhancement of life. When we work through the implications of these truths, then we see sex in a new perspective: that new creation which comes into being within our own lives and emanates throughout all of our relationships.

[2] *Ibid.*

Distinguishing and Combining These Powers Commands the Christian's Best Effort



Tragedy and Triumph

By Ronald E. Sleeth

ONE critic, writing of the American theater-going public, says that "our audiences want to be harrowed and even slightly shocked from eight till ten-thirty, and then reassured before eleven." "Yes," says another, "what the American public wants is a tragedy with a happy ending." Although these comments may reflect our tastes in drama, it is debatable whether they mirror the mood of our society as a whole. Rather, a good case could be made that most of us revel in one extreme or the other — *tragedy* or *happiness* as a way of life.

Many people today are satisfied with the tragedy of life. Unamuno, the Spanish philosopher, writes of the *Tragic Sense of Life,* and this seems to be the prevailing mood in our world. A few weeks ago a group of disenchanted TV writers led by the creative Paddy Chayefsky were discussing why they were leaving TV for the theater and the movies. One said:

> The most exciting work that I see is being done by writers who look around and see total disaster. And it may very well be that they're right. It may be that we are living in a culture that is headed for total disaster.

Indeed, total disaster has become the theme for these writers. In Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* we see a microcosm of the kind of tragedy which walks our streets. There are Willy Lomans in our midst who, if not taking the way of suicide, still live in the despair of meaninglessness. And in Theodore Dreiser's naturalistic novel *An American Tragedy* we see portrayed the fate of a young man enmeshed in inevitable forces over which he has no control.

But this is not the philosophy of our writers alone. Others feel the same way. For example, the German who, having experienced the ravages of war, sees the East-West struggle as only a game and plods along unmoved by the flutterings of the doves of peace and waits only for the inevitable day when he is enveloped in the last great holocaust.

But the despair and tragedy to be seen in the world is not only man facing titanic forces over which he has no control. Some of the tragedy is of a sophisticated nature buttressed by an intellectual philosophy. From the time of the Greeks with their scepticism, cynicism and stoicism to the age of Nietzsche and Jean-Paul Sartre we see tragedy given a rationale. The modern existentialist who sees no hope beyond the moment of his existence has given a sophisticated respectability to the sadness which the ordinary man feels in his bones.

Stoic Hopelessness

But it is not only the ordinary man, the existentialists and the writers who signify the modern tragic sense of life. Tragedy has been baptized into the church and many Christians even have grounded their faith in a kind of stoic hopelessness. This view, conditioned more often by sociological than theological factors, enables our faith to rise no higher than our present situation, with perhaps a nod to an ultimate, faraway victory by God who is content, deistic-like, to fly above the storm.

The ethics of tragedy, whether Christian or not, can bog down into a moment-by-moment relativity, shattering whatever absolutes they please: monogomy is a mockery; sex a tool to be used for the gratification of the moment; and a self-concern which is exemplified in Sartre's dictum that "Hell is other people" is the order of the day.

Now, this is not to say that life is not tragic in many of its aspects. We do live in a world of tragedy and only a schizophrenic Nero enjoys playing the fiddle while the Romes of the world burn.

But to recognize the all-pervading aspects of the tragic does not complete the picture. For, at the other extreme, the pessimists have a valiant opponent in optimism. It is interesting to note that in a time such as ours some react to events by succumbing to them while others tend to ignore them.

On the most elementary level we can see this optimism, romanticism and happiness cult in our

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living rooms on TV. With "Wyatt Earp," "Wagon Train" and "Gunsmoke" we can all be involved in riding a stagecoach of escape into the West where we can see evil blasted by the two guns of righteousness slung low on the hips of our heroes — that is, ourselves in projection. The simplicity of right and wrong makes the choice easy — in fantasy. Shirley Temple will assure us that the heroine is rescued and the villain will at least wear black so the moral is crystal clear. One writer points out that the Robert Montgomery show was interested only in "happy shows for happy people." And there is always that positivist Lawrence Welk with whom we can dance into champagne buoyancy whenever we feel that life gets too tough.

Happiness Cult

But this view has its antecedents too. From the time of the Epicureans down through the German idealists in philosophy and the romantics in literature to the modern Madison Avenue executives, the happiness cult is established. Now, this optimistic view of things — a high regard for man's goodness and at the same time a penchant for overlooking tragedy — is not the province of idealistic philosophy or romantic literature alone. It too has found its way into religion through various forms of mysticism, humanism, peace-of-mind cults and irrelevant biblicisms which enable us to think and act positively in the face of evil.

A good friend of mine told me recently that he was no longer inspired by Browning. When he said this I was shocked for Browning had been his hero. "No," he said, "the optimism of Browning does not fit life as I now know it." No longer could he say, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world," nor could he say with Rabbi Ben Ezra, "Welcome each rebuff that turns earth's smoothness rough." Or, "Grow old along with me, the best is yet to be." This man had recently been dealt a tragic blow by the loss of loved ones and was now facing the last few years in loneliness. What could Browning say to him?

Yes, the problem with the optimistic view of life is that it tries to escape from tragedy by oversimplifying on the one hand, or, on the other, by trying to maintain itself as a way of life and ending in tragedy itself. Even the western heroes are not all black and white, morally speaking. They seem complicated and hard to simplify. When the optimistic bubble bursts — and burst it will if not tempered with the realism of the tragic — then despair and tragedy result. In a real sense then, both the optimistic and the tragic views of life eventually reach the same level of despair, hopelessness and meaninglessness.

But it is at this precise point that the Christian gospel comes to bear. From the Bible down through history to Kierkegaard, Dostoevski and Paul Tillich there is the unrelenting theme that in the midst of despair and meaninglessness the condition for faith is ripe. Out of the ruins of our own self-concerns, the Christian gospel will have meaning for each of us.

And this brings us back to our opening quotation about the drama critic's appraisal of American tastes. "We want a tragedy with a happy ending." Well, there is a time when all men, while not necessarily desiring tragedy but recognizing tragedy in life, desire a victory over it. Not a superficial happiness which comes on the stage at 10:40, but an assurance that the Author of the cosmic drama knows how the story turns out, is concerned with the actors and will resolve the play in an ultimate victory. This is the happy or victorious ending for which all men wistfully cry.

It is at this point that our Scripture lesson becomes relevant. It is no accident that the basis for this sermon has been not only the Palm Sunday passages, but the crucifixion and resurrection passages as well. To see Palm Sunday without Good Friday is a shallow optimism. This is exactly what many of Jesus' followers did. When they saw the triumphant entry they were exultant. When they believed he would set up an earthly kingdom and overthrow the Roman government they were buoyant. Even those closest to the Master were filled with hopes which they expected to be fulfilled within the week. But Good Friday ruined the shallowness of Palm Sunday for many disciples and hence they disappeared, disaffected and even denied their Lord. The cross of Friday displaced the crowds of Palm Sunday.

On the other hand, Good Friday cannot be seen apart from Easter morning. Of all the tragedies, the greatest would be that God's will was defeated at Calvary. We would indeed have reason for irredeemable hopelessness. "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." But that is not the Christian faith. The Christian faith is: "But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus was not a dead martyr, but the resurrected Son of God. This is the faith of the Christian church which sees the tragedies of the world, looks at them realistically and tries to redeem them, knowing that God's ultimate victory cannot be denied, just as the events of Holy Week could not defeat the Resurrection.

What does all this have to say to you and me?

In the first place, we should remember that the rhythm of tragedy and triumph is a continual motif in day-by-day living. The tragedies of life have their triumphs when seen and handled by those of faith. Most of us don't think much about tragedy. We see the tragedy of huge hydrogen forces, but the personal tragedies of life may seem far away. But what about the student who discovers that after years of planning for a medical career

(Continued on page 22)

It Takes a Great and Strong Man
To Fling Away Life – for Life's Sake

When Right Rules Might

By Lowell M. Atkinson

THE greatest problem of our age is the problem of power. In fact, I think the greatest problem of any age in human history is that of power — the use of might. There are three possible outcomes in its use: the possibility of might ruling right; the possibility of right having no might; and the possibility of right ruling might.

The significance of Palm Sunday is that it gives us Jesus' answer to the persistent, difficult and often critical problem of power. And his answer was that right should rule might.

When might rules right, we have a situation in which power is undisciplined by moral and spiritual considerations. We have experienced this in cruel fashion in our modern history. We have seen the unleashing of power in dictatorship. We have seen what results when moral and spiritual standards are abandoned and power becomes simply naked, unabashed might. When might rules right, tragedy stalks the world. "Power corrupts," as Lord Acton has said, and "great power corrupts greatly." Men have always been corrupted by power, and at the very moment when they felt themselves able to do what they wanted to do, they have been inclined to shed the restraints of the moral and spiritual realm.

When Might Rules Right

But there was a particular irony and pathos about our situation, for we had come to think that we had outgrown this human tragedy of might ruling right. In the first decade of this century, which Winston Churchill once said was the most pleasant and balmy period in his lifetime, we thought we had outgrown tyranny, the use of violent force and mass bloodshed. Stories of ruthless conquerors seemed to be relegated to a romantic, shadowy and distant past. And against that background of utopian and optimistic, if somewhat superficial, hopefulness that this would be henceforth a world of amiability and peace, looms the dark tragedy of the world's worst wars. The crushing blows of World War I and II, shattering the faith and hope of men at the very time when our faith was most tender and our hope most delirious, constitutes one of the greatest ironies of all time. We have seen what happens when might rules right and now we know we must find in our faith realistic guidance in the use of power.

When Right Has No Might

Another possibility is that right should be honored but should have no might. I read a book by a pacifist the other day, and this is precisely what he believes — that right should have no might, that amiability should exist as amiability, but should not be implemented. Goodwill should be kindliness but without any sinews and muscles capable of striking a blow. He was very embarrassed by the fact that Jesus flexed his muscles and struck a blow and used a whip, and so he tries to eliminate this incident in the Bible.

A more accurate interpretation is that the gospel does *not* present us with a Christ whose meekness is weakness. If he was amiable, his amiability was strong and discriminating, and he was as often unamiable. He had the truth. He *was* the Truth. He was the Way. He was the Life. He came from God. He was the Son of God. How was he to implement the right? Was he to substantiate it with might or not? There was strength in his meekness and a quality of power in his life that does not allow thinking of him as being merely amiable in the presence of embattled evil. There were his thundering woes upon the Pharisees, his excoriations of those who flaunted their pride in the very face of God. Some believed he was Elijah, the man of power and whirlwind strength, a tremendously dramatic and powerful figure. Others said Jesus was like John the Baptist, that stern prophet of doom who lived in the wilderness. Jesus left the impression of courage and strong conviction and a quality of spiritual might that is quite different

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from anything weak, or merely mild and good-natured.

A centurion asked Him to come and heal his sick servant. Note the impression Jesus made on this Roman army officer. The awe-inspired centurion speaks of Jesus' strength and authority. Jesus gave even this hardened military man the impression of power, not of weakness.

Again on Palm Sunday Jesus' actions were decisive and strong. This day he was acting with a deliberateness and a definiteness that revealed his own quality of strength. People recognized something regal in his mien and they hailed him as a powerful king. They flung their garments on the ground. They raised the palm branches as they would celebrate a strong and victorious ruler. They cried, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord."

When Right Rules Might

Yet we all know there was something different, something unique about this king, for in his life right ruled might. He was a king whose dauntless dignity found its seal of approval within, in the touch of God's spirit. Once he had looked upon a crowd and walked through their midst when they were trying to hurl him to his death from a cliff. Once on the Mount of Transfiguration men had looked at him in astonishment and had felt here was someone whose rightness found such strength in terms of spiritual and personal quality that all the armies of the earth in comparison would be but weakness. Somehow all the spiritual resources of heaven were brought to earth in his kind of strength and in his kind of might.

You see this all through Passion Week. Jesus was not afraid to do the kind of things that would shame ordinary men. He dared to die a shameful death, crucified between two thieves. It takes a great and a strong man to fling away life itself like that. He was not afraid to do it.

It is our Christian faith that this moral and spiritual power that is given to us in glimpses in the gospel actually is the greatest power in all the universe. It is right using the spiritual might of God himself, to be established in its dignity and authority so that nothing ever said will contradict the truth that Jesus Christ brought and lived before men. Nothing ever done will supplant his deed on Calvary. When we say he sat down at the right hand of God, we mean that his place is a place of authority and power. Whoever is loyal to Jesus will enter into life, and whoever repudiates him will discover his life is deteriorating. Jesus' rightness is so strong that it is definitive. With him you live, without him you die.

And yet, this King that comes in the name of the Lord brings to us not only the might and power of God, but also the love of God. He who could compel us to do anything that he wanted, rather invites us and — incredible as this may seem — even attempts to win us to his truth.

And the great question always is, What will we do with that eternal rightness that Christ brought to men? God has made us capable of accepting it and capable of repudiating it. He will always invite, not compel; yet we cannot escape that final framework of the might that is in his right. We may use our freedom to repudiate him, but we have only excluded ourselves from life, so great is his power, so tremendous is the structure of his might. We cannot escape it. He is the Judge of all men. Was there ever a Judge like this — a Judge who, when he raises his hand and pronounces sentence, reveals in his hand the mark of the nail? A Judge who himself will get into the prisoner's box and accept the penalty and die for the prisoner?

In Malory's "Death of Arthur" there is related an incident when King Arthur in disguise goes out into the field of battle with his knights. When it is all over and it is discovered that this unknown knight is the king himself, his friends of the court rebuke him because he hazarded his life in the dangerous places of the battlefield. But Arthur will not accept their rebuke and only says that he would be a poor kind of a king if he could not risk his life along with his brave knights. Because he is a strong king he brings himself to the places of peril and danger in the battlefield of life.

Our Savior is like that — so strong that he dares to suffer, die and hazard life itself in the fierce battle with evil. He will never be defeated, for he is the King who comes in the name of the Lord, and in his life we see how right rules might. And while the great flagrant exhibitions of earthly power come and go, the Master of truth and right remains. His right rules might, always!

Absence and Event

(Continued from page 5)

knowledge. We are pitched into dry-mouthed fear by the realization that with all our power we are left alone, having to bear our own weight and find our own directions. At times we are tempted to take some sacred thing of the past — something Moses made — and worship it, until a mature Hezekiah comes along to disabuse us of our sentimental remembrance. Not only a shiny brass serpent, but a grand household deity whom we would make an object among other things can become not treasure, but trash. The awareness of God's absence deepens our exile, but it also shakes us from lace-trimmed, stained-glass religiousness.

The realism we are brought to reminds us that it is not some supposed little truth we have lost, some fairy stories we have begun to see through. Our peril is that we have lost or may lose our very selves because we have them only if we receive them as given in trust and demanding of our loyalty. The critical danger pervading every social structure today is not overpopulation, not scientific arrogance, not even violent inhumanity, but the fearful assumption that man is there to be managed and manipulated, that we are all nothing more than things, that the center of existence is impossibly broken and that finally nothing can fill the emptyness. When we face this, we can ask questions which look rude and impertinent only to an antisceptic religiousness. Then we can hurl forth the question we need to ask: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?"

Access to Meaning

The answer comes too, as it did for John and his disciples, when there are exposed to us the loose ends, the jagged edges, the cracks in the history and nature which surround and pervade us. These come into view in all our knowing. To be brought to the very edge of the abyss they open to us, without the assurance of unanticipated support; to have exposed to us the deepest cracks in things — this is to discover that God has his own possibilities. Where such gaps are, there freedom is and there the event of God may come.

Note the way in which John's question is answered. Not by an offhand authority-impressed Lord. Jesus does not say, "Remind him of all the excitement when I was born. Have him recall that at my baptism an authoritative word was spoken, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.' " Instead Jesus refers him to miracles, and John is left free to come to his own affirmation. "Are miracles reliable evidence?" we ask. The miracle here, as elsewhere in the New Testament, is the sign that God is doing something, that he is acting in power, that he is present in redemptive movement where there is only a crack. The miracle is not a natural fact; it is a void, a gap left free to be understood as the event of God. Miracles may be maltreated when we make them the objects of our analyses, when we do not see them as accesses to possible meaning. Gabriel Marcel has said, "Hope is only possible in a world where there is room for miracles."

Thus comes Jesus' response: "Go and tell John, tell him what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them." "Go and tell John where you found me and what you found me doing. I give my attention to the continuing cracks in human life." No absolute knowledge, no final certainty, not even proper interpretation and authoritative understanding; just the abyss in things, the miracle, which in trust is filled by the event of God. And he, with us, is to ask of it not "could it have happened?" but "is God present in it?"

Faith is never a certainty but only a possibility. With all that we may know we must still make the resolution. The human spirit survives not only on the basis of answers to answerable questions, but also by the risk of going on in life stirred by the freedom to resolve those questions which are unanswerable.

The rarest capacity of the image which is in man is this freedom, the freedom with which to risk the possibility and trust of receiving our life from God, and our returning our service in the world to his glory alone. It is a demanding loyalty, so unobvious. We need not give our life for what we know to be true, grounded in fact, because that truth sooner or later is known to everyone. But when we hold to what is true because we know it as faith, that truth is maintained through its believers and their resolute witness. So, faith is a possibility as science is a certainty; faith rests on our freedom and the event of God's coming. The knowledge we have comes upon gaps, and gives evidence of a freedom we have for the world because we are free from it. Where this is, there the possibility of trust and faith is given.

A Veiled Return

Christ is himself the hinge of this possibility. He is the miracle. The gap left by God's absence from the world is the gap which leaves it free to receive a veiled return. He has not made himself obvious in his return, like a debutante who comes out of hiding to be adored as a lovely thing. His return is another hiding; it is a hint of promise and possibility. We need to continue to ask of this event of his return not "can we be certain of it?" but "can we *be* without it?"

All our belief is left open to possible fracture; this is the possibility our intellectual quest itself must keep alive; it is the necessity which all critical inquiry requires and sustains. No absolute security is obvious. But we are left with a hint and a witness as to how God has filled an awesome absence by an eventful presence. By grace the trust we do not know can still be ours if we follow it faithfully. We need not see it that way; we need not follow the hint. But, if we shut out that possibility, if we permit ourselves the loss of the gratitude we felt when we heard that the wounds of absence had been so generously healed, if we give up a faith born of doubt by which we can be justified, if at all, then we are without hope. Then we will cease all our asking and searching and probing; we will no longer strike our tents and go out. For we can only go out and go on if we do so in faith.

The Great Procession

By Charles M. Crowe

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

THE great procession got under way with the commissioning of the disciples by Jesus after the resurrection. Upon the shoulders of these eleven simple men was placed what must have seemed a fantastic responsibility. They were not educated. They were not rich. They were not leaders. They had no earthly power. Yet they were to set in motion influences which were to girdle the globe and were destined to shape the course of history for uncounted centuries. If there was ever a venture of faith, this was it. It was compounded of imagination, of daring, of audacity, of sublime confidence. Eleven men against the Roman Empire! Eleven men against the world! Eleven men against history! Those eleven men have become unnumbered multitudes. Their story is a tale of courage, sacrifice, heroism, martyrdom, triumph. And it has just begun.

One of the eleven men was the disciple Philip. He was led by God to leave Jerusalem and go southward by the desert route. On the road he came upon a man from Ethiopia traveling in a chariot. Philip told him about Jesus as the Savior sent from God who had suffered and been crucified. The Ethiopian was so moved by this account that he asked Philip to baptize him in a nearby stream.

In this simple act the great procession got under way. Here was a man of substance and position. He was a seeker. He was looking for something to satisfy his inner spirit. Philip came by, led of God, and talked to him honestly and openly about Jesus. And he became the first convert to Christianity. So it has been through the centuries that followed. Men forever become dissatisfied with themselves and with lesser faiths. They seek something. They reach out for reality. Then other men who have found reality in Jesus Christ pass along the good news of the Savior. Thus from life to life, and heart to heart, and mind to mind the message of salvation through the risen Christ made its magnificent pilgrimage among men.

Even today this is still the genius of the Christian movement. Its basic secret lies not in the building of churches or in raising money or in the appointment of committees or in the perfecting of efficient organizations. It lies in the willingness of Christian disciples to meet the deep heart-hunger of modern men by telling them of the good news of Jesus. Philip reminds us of the need to be more articulate witnesses for the Savior.

After such humble beginnings, the great procession gathered momentum rapidly. Many were added to it because bold and imaginative men were willing to respond to the need of other men beyond their own borders. One of these was Saul of Tarsus, who, after a personal encounter with Christ, became Paul, the restless ambassador of the Christian cause. Paul did not choose Christ. Christ chose him. The inner power of the gospel drove Paul from city to city and village to village across the Mediterranean world. He was the first great missionary, evangelist and church builder. One night Paul dreamed and saw a vision of a young man from across the sea in Macedonia saying: "Come over and help us!" To Paul, this was a call from God. So yet a new chapter in the life of the Christian church began. Paul took a ship to cross the Aegean Sea. This marked the extension of the great procession into Macedonia and Greece. It symbolizes for us the tremendous missionary thrust inherent in the early Christian church, and built into the gospel message itself.

And, after all, why shouldn't this be so? Why should the missionary enterprise of the church always be suspect? When an inventor devises a new machine to benefit humanity, he is anxious that it be used as widely as possible. When a doctor discovers a new medicine to relieve pain, it is heralded

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to all people. When a new source of power is uncovered, willing hands translate it into the services of mankind. Why should it be different with religious truth? The self-revelation of God to men in the living Christ was the greatest news of the ages. It is still so today. And we, like Paul, are still under the compulsion of the great commission to answer the cry of many men from many Macedonias to come over and help them. To be blind to the vision and deaf to the appeal would be to betray the nature of Christian truth, of which we are custodians and for which we are called to be ambassadors. For the Christian, the need of men is a call to us from God. And the Christian church proclaims the truth that the gospel of Christ is the one answer to the needs of humanity.

Awakening and Renewal

The great procession kept moving and widening during the centuries after Bible times. It survived criticism, banishment, persecution, paganism, rival philosophies and indifference. But by the 15th century the vitality and beauty of the Christian message became imprisoned in the unbelievable doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. These entrenched abuses came between the people and God. They misrepresented the true spirit of Christ. Then came the awakening through Martin Luther, a scholarly monk. After enduring spiritual discipline and performing all the rites and rituals of the church he still found no peace. Finally the word of Paul in Romans, "The just shall live by faith," released his soul in joy and peace. Luther then came to see that it was not by fastings and scourgings that men are saved but by the mercy of God that was declared in Christ. Later this brave monk challenged Emperor Charles V to his face and said: "My conscience has been taken captive by these words of God. . . . Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise! God help me. Amen." These events shook the corrupt world of the Middle Ages to its foundations. The Reformation which was begun by Luther opened the way for the Renaissance and sent the great procession on its way with renewed vitality and meaning.

Even today it is good for us to be thus reminded that the gospel of Christ is an explosive and living thing. It is more than good works. It lives by faith in the hearts of humble men. It breaks out of all bonds of rigid ecclesiasticism. It defies all earthly tyranny over the mind and the spirit. The truth of Christ is the truth of the everliving God and as such it carries the seeds of its own renewal and rebirth. This undergirds our faith with hope in every succeeding generation, including our own. Christians, unafraid of men and of the gospel, are a greater force than any demagogue tyrant or tyranny on earth.

The scene of the great procession now shifts to England with the translation of the Bible into English by William Tyndale. Tyndale said that he would cause the boy who drove the plow to know as much about the Bible as any scholar. But both king and bishop were opposed to this work. The opposition was so great that Tyndale had to flee to Germany where he continued his translation. When it was finally printed, copies were smuggled into England. The Bishop of London burned all the copies that could be found in the square outside St. Paul's Cathedral. But the merchant, Augustine Packynton, who smuggled in the Bibles, was a friend of Tyndale. So the more books the Bishop bought up and burned, the more Bibles Augustine Packynton smuggled into the country. But the enemies of Tyndale were fanatical in their desire to keep the Bible from the people. They pursued the scholar to Germany and Belgium where he was arrested, imprisoned, strangled and his body burned.

So it is that William Tyndale is symbolic of the many brave men who went to death in the defense of their new-found faith. This man, of course, stands also for the glorious and hard-won Protestant idea that the word of God is open and available to all men, and that no church or king, no pope or potentate, has the right to deprive men of their right to read the Bible in their own tongue and interpret as they will. If we today knew how much this open Book cost and what it means to us we would guard it with our very lives. For it, in all reality, is the source of our modern democratic and religious freedoms, as well as the heart and source of our Christian faith. Let no modern intellectual take a dim view of this book. The gates of hell cannot stand against it. It is our stockpile of explosive ammunition, more powerful and pertinent to our time than all our ICBMs and earth satellites.

Rediscovered Truth

The great procession grew as England grew. But, as had been the case in earlier centuries, the gospel message became encased and formalized in the state Church of England, far removed from the people. When that happened, as always, the spiritual life of the English people decayed in the 18th century. Then God laid his hand upon John Wesley, much as he had before singled out Paul and Luther. Wesley was a clergyman in the Church of England but his heart was cold and he found no joy or power in his formal faith and works. Then in a little prayer meeting in Aldersgate Street, while a Moravian preacher was commenting on Luther's translation of Paul's letter to the Romans, Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed. This personal experience became the powerful force behind the Wesleyan revival which changed the character and course of England. Wesley took the gospel of the saving power of Christ to the people in the fields and on the street. The Wesleyan movement marked the beginnings of the Methodist Church. But more

than that, the figure of John Wesley stands today as a symbol of the rediscovered truth that Christ claims the hearts of men as well as their minds.

The genius of the Protestant movement is the belief that the heart of religion is a personal experience of God in Christ. This personal, firsthand, individual experience is the pivot around which all our beliefs and practices center. It is this direct contact of the human spirit with the Spirit of God which gives a sense of personal assurance and certainty to our faith that makes the soul steadfast and undefeated. When man's spirit is possessed by the spirit of Christ, faith is taken out of the realm of analysis and speculation and becomes a warm, living, vital thing. It puts iron in our blood and sends us forward to serve God, to resist tyranny, to challenge evil, and to spend and be spent in the service of the Kingdom.

The great procession then moved in power from England to the new world. The pioneer preacher with a Bible in his saddlebag kept pace with the American frontier as it moved to the West. Those were rugged days in the Middle West in the 18th and 19th centuries. They demanded robust Christians with a vigorous faith. It is well to remind ourselves of the sacrifices and devotion of these early leaders who have left us so great a heritage. Indeed, the route of the great procession is rough with stones and lined with crosses. With our comfortable churches, easygoing life and refined religion, are we worthy of those stalwarts of the faith that have gone before and paved the way? It is a disturbing question. For our modern enemies of the gospel may be different but they are equally demanding.

Unconquerable Presence

As we have thus tried to catch a quick glimpse of the great procession, we are acutely aware of one thing: that God must be in it. Had this not been so, the Christian movement long since would have disappeared. But God *was* in it, and thus it not only survived every hardship and enemy, but actually thrived on sacrifice, persecution and martyrdom. It is this that makes it still unconquerable.

The great procession moves on. It includes today all who name the name of Christ. With such a faith and such a heritage, its greatest days are yet ahead. To the unknown future God calls us. The great procession is made up not of abstract ideas, social movements, buildings of stone or works of art. It is made up of people, of those who venture to respond in faith to the great commission of Jesus: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." If the way sometimes seems uncertain we will not falter. For we share the faith of Martin Luther when he said in the stormy days of his own battle for the gospel: "It is impossible for one who hopes in God not to rejoice; even if the world falls to wreck, he will be overwhelmed undismayed under the ruins." May such a deathless hope in the God of Christ the Savior be the mark of those who today would be a part of this glorious procession! The custodians of the gospel dare not be discouraged for the gospel itself is undefeatable.

Tragedy and Triumph

(Continued from page 16)

he finds he is not scholastically equipped to do the job? Or what about the coed who finds her engagement broken in May of her senior year before her September wedding? Or, the discovery of a lingering illness? Yes, even on the most personal levels we may find tragedies which leave us either in hopeless despair or which may be redeemed into triumphs. The boy who stumbled in organic chemistry in the pre-med course may discover that all of these years he was trying to please parents when his real desire was to be a high school teacher. The girl who found the summer an unbelievable period of hopelessness pulled herself together for another year of study in her major field. The illness may teach patience, consideration and self-discovery.

Or, we may learn that when anyone tries to exemplify Christian love in the world he may find that there is tragedy itself. The person with genuine concern for others may have his motives suspected; the one who speaks of brotherhood may be called "pink"; the one who has an ethical standard may be proclaimed a "square." Yes, there is a price to pay, but remembering the cross, the faithful Christian can pay that price. A character in Francois Mauriac's *The Lamb* says of a young seminarian who gave his life, "Yes, Michele, love is crucified in the world and we with it." But for the Christian there is not only a crucifixion of love, there is a resurrection as well.

Finally, there is the decisive victory of Christ over death. This is the sign of God's great victory over the greatest tragedy and no Christian is able to lose sight of that.

In the preface to one of Winston Churchill's volumes of the war years, he writes: "I have called this volume triumph and tragedy because the overwhelming victory of the Grand alliance has failed so far to bring general peace to our anxious world."* The Christian can say, "I have called this gospel *tragedy* and *triumph,* because the seeming victory of man's grand alliance of sin, disillusionment and meaninglessness has been overcome in God's decisive victory in Christ." This is the gospel message; this is the tragedy with a victorious ending!

* Winston S. Churchill, *Triumph and Tragedy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1935). Used by permission.

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By DANIEL D. WALKER

Introduction by Bishop Gerald Kennedy

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The Rhythm of Sacramental Worship

By Walter S. Davison

IT has often been observed that in every authentic experience of worship there are two movements, the one ascending, the other descending. "There are two moods, a search and a reception." The first is the mood of aspiration, the ascent of man's spirit seeking God.

> Minister: Lift up your hearts.
>
> People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

The heart goes out to God in wonder, awe and praise; in penitence and sense of need.

The second mood is the passive, the receptive. "Wait on the Lord," "Be still and know." Before the presence of Eternal Love as we see Him revealed in Christ Jesus, the soul is bowed in quietness waiting for the descending movement of that Love in ministry to the worshiper, waiting in reverent trust, in confidence, in expectant openness for His benediction and His gifts, for the action of Divine grace.

Other terms are sometimes used to interpret this experience. The twofold rhythm of worship is first adoration, then edification. Adoration is the lifting of man's spirit to God in glad recognition and grateful praise, in faith and love and self-giving.

> My soul doth magnify the Lord.
> Our Father, hallowed be thy name.
> I am thine, O Lord; I have heard thy voice.

And then God's return movement, God reaching down to the soul and "edifying" the soul thus freely opened to him, feeding it, building it up, ministering to it in the myriad ways love knows, giving the amazing assurance, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction." "He restoreth my soul." This is ever the outcome of worship that is offered "in spirit and in truth."

But there is a simpler way in which I like to describe these vital events, a way so comprehensible that the youngest and most untutored Christian may become more clearly aware of what the action of Christian worship involves. We may say that worship is a giving and a receiving; and that the double action of giving and receiving is not only on man's part but on God's part as well.

Supreme Moment

Nowhere is this pattern more evident than in the supreme moment of Christian worship, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. You have noted how centrally the forms of the verb "give" and "take" appear in the words of the institution of the Lord's Supper.

> And He took bread, and when he had *given* thanks, He brake it and *gave* to them, saying, *Take,* eat; this is my body which is *given* for you. And He took the cup and *gave* thanks, and *gave* it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.

His eager desire and request of them was that they should take his gifts, and in receiving them should keep him always in remembrance.

But before they were ready to receive, those disciples had to prepare themselves through giving. That they had given, the whole gospel story makes clear. They had given Him not only their friendship, their affection and admiration, but their highest loyalty. They had left all and followed him. The Upper Room experience was the Master's way of putting the final seal on his acceptance of that self-dedication, his receiving of their sacrifice, and of his giving in return the Bread of Heaven for the continuing sustenance of their costly devotion.

As it was with those first disciples, so it is with us, his disciples of today. When we gather about the table at the invitation of our Lord, we are conscious of many movements of the soul. But there is required of us at least one central and indispensable act without which no creative communion is possible. That act is expressed in the time-honored words that occur near the end of the consecration prayer just before the administration of the Sacrament:

> And here we offer and present unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice; and we beseech Thee mercifully to accept this our sacrifice. . . .

Unless we make that act of reconsecration, of full and grateful self-giving, with complete sincerity, we have not fulfilled the precondition for receiving our Lord's greatest gift. Unless we give ourselves to Him in honest loyalty and openness, he cannot give himself to us and we can therefore have no real communion with him.

Of course, we "offer and present ourselves" unto Him not as perfect beings, but just as we are with all our failures, weaknesses, sins and shortcomings heavy upon us. And seeing ourselves thus we must offer our penitence, our confession, our plea for forgiveness, our aspirations to be made clean and to be given courage and strength for a new start.

All this is the ascending movement of our human spirits, and to it there is the immediate response of the Divine Spirit of love. With joy he receives our sacrifice of penitence and praise. He accepts our renewed self-dedication. And at once, in faith, we are conscious of his descending movement, his edification, his self-giving to us. He says to our souls, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt; thy sins are forgiven thee." He says, "Take, eat; take, drink; this is my life given for you." He feeds us with the "Bread of the world in mercy broken," and refreshes with the "Wine of the soul in mercy shed." We take, and are healed; we are nourished and strengthened to do and to endure. We feel a thrilling access of new energy from eternal sources. With adoring awe we are aware of the Real Presence, close and dear, as he "breathes on" us, even as on them of old in the Upper Room, and says to us too, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit." "As many as

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WALTER S. DAVISON, *whose death occurred shortly after the acceptance of the above article for publication, was Dean Emeritus of Auburn Theological Seminary and former chairman of the department of practical theology at Union Theological Seminary. Mr. Davison, a graduate of Princeton University and Auburn Seminary, was a Presbyterian minister and taught several years in colleges in Beirut and Istanbul.*

received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God."

How mysteriously wonderful, how passing all understanding, yet how utterly real this commerce of spirit between the divine and the human! God giving first of all; for God's seeking of the soul of man is prior to all man's seeking for God. "For God so loved . . . that He gave. . . ."

I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek Him seeking me.

Man, then, in his turn, responding to the divine touch, giving himself in need and hope and trust and receiving in faith and gratitude. Then God, on his part, accepting our worship with joy and giving again with love and power. This is the rhythm of sacramental worship.

But it is not yet finished. There is one more beat in that rhythm. Worship involves on man's part a giving and a receiving, and then a *giving again*. After Communion we descend from our Mount of Transfiguration into the valley of everyday need. We go from the Table to give, in Christ's name and in his strength, to the world in which we live. This is the practical and the ethical outcome of authentic worship — this is the proof of its reality. We cannot keep on receiving unless we keep on giving. We are channels, not storehouses. Our Lord is our bread. We feed on him. But also it is fearful and wonderful to know, as I once heard a discerning minister say, that we too are bread and that other people feed on us. If we are steadily nourished and sustained by Christ, then our attitudes, our actions and reactions, our characters, become heavenly bread, and men will be nourished by us even when we are wholly unconscious of the ministry.

So our prayer at Communion is not just "Feed me," but rather

Feed me, Lord, that I may feed
Thy hungering ones with manna sweet.

Our prayer is not simply "Strengthen me," but rather

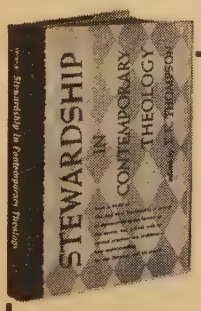
Strengthen me that while I stand
Firm on the Rock and strong in Thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

"By our own self-giving," says Evelyn Underhill, "we all carry through into history some fragment of His life and love and saving power. That is what it means to be members of the Body of Christ; that is, a part of a spiritual organism filled with the Spirit of Christ, fed and energized by His life; and each one of us committed to carrying out some share of His work in the world."

Let us not shrink from this call because we feel ourselves weak and unworthy. From the very beginning the transmitters of Christ's life have been faulty people like ourselves. Those first disciples were not a collection of saints and wise men, at least not to begin with; but "they were surrendered to Him and so could be woven into the tissues of the Church that transmits His saving love." We face the hungry multitudes today in deep perplexity as those disciples faced them in Galilee. When the Master says to us, "Give ye them to eat," our sense of inadequacy often overwhelms us and we protest, "But Master, what I have to give is so little, only my five loaves and a couple of fish, and today's multitude is so big, and its lostness and need so appalling." Quietly he insists, "Bring what you have and give it to me."

If only we could learn to do that habitually, daily, hourly, and have the faith to take him at his word. "Give me what you have," he says. "Put into my hands as completely as you can whatever gifts and talents are yours; and you will find that they can become a multiplied sustenance for famished men in a measure far beyond your imagining."

This, then, is the sacramental sequence, supernatural, miraculous from beginning to end: First, "God so loved the world that He gave His Son"; second, "As many as received Him to them gave He power"; third, "Go in My Name; give ye them to eat"; fourth, "Whosoever receiveth you receiveth Me."



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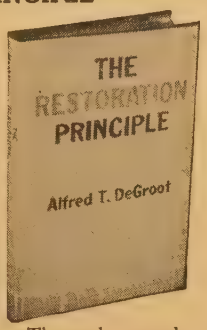

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Book Reviews

MARCH OF THE YEAR. *By G. Curtis Jones. Bethany. $3.50.*

THIS is a collection of sermons for special days of the year in the nonliturgical tradition. In addition to sermons on the great festivals of the church year, there are sermons for such nonecclesiastical days as Youth Sunday, Race Relations Sunday, Budget Sunday, Go-to-College Sunday and Women's Day. The sermons are declarative rather than interpretative, popular rather than theological, topical rather than textual — though a text is always announced. The language is direct and clear; sentences frequently arrest the reader with their crisp and almost aphoristic quality. The sermons are copiously illustrated from the Bible, everyday life and the literature of the past and present. Their inspirational value should be appreciated by laymen. One particularly useful feature for ministers is an appendix called "Starting Blocks" which contains suggested topics and texts for special occasions during the year. Ministers who are often baffled by the "special day" and want a fresh approach to an event which seems to have been "preached out" will find this volume helpful. — *Arthur W. Mielke, Park Central Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, N. Y.*

GOD AND CAESAR. *A Christian Approach to Social Ethics. Edited by Warren A. Quanbeck. Augsburg. $3.95.*

SINCE World War II Lutheran theologians have been turning their attention to the study of the church and the state. Perhaps, with no little feeling of guilt, they have sought to uncover in Lutheranism a dynamic social ethic. How well they have succeeded might best be assessed by non-Lutherans.

Certainly there is within the Lutheranism of Luther a broad-gauge understanding of the Christian's responsibility to the social order. But one has the feeling that we Lutherans today are talking *about* the social order rather than *to* it. In spite of the excellent scholarship of this volume, its appeal probably will be chiefly to Lutherans. Yet, there is both irony and hope in the fact that a church which often thinks in monological terms is addressing itself to the problems of a pluralistic society.

Otto Piper, George Forell, Arthur Piepkorn, Jaroslav Pelikan, Walter Bauer, Ernest Schwiebert and Paul Bretscher have done a competent job of relating a dynamic ethic to questions of political form, orders of creation, nationalism, totalitarianism, the American Revolution, the capitalistic revolution and the Communist Manifesto.

I have the hope that the next time around these writers will be engaged in a dialogue with other Protestants, Roman Catholics and secularists. This book is a significant contribution to that end. — *Robert M. Herhold, St. John's Lutheran Church, Mound, Minn.*

AGGRESSION. *By John Paul Scott. University of Chicago Press. $3.75.*

FROM a more general viewpoint, the experiments with mice show us that aggression has to be learned," Dr. John Paul Scott contends. He is senior staff scientist and chairman of the division of behavior studies for the Roscoe B. Jackson Memorial Laboratory at Bar Habor, Maine.

The author presents a concise, 149-page study of social and ecological causes, individual and group consequences and social control of aggression. His broad perspective enables him to range from the psychological factors affecting fighting to its physiological aspects. Observations of human fighting are not easily studied, so many of his illustrations are scientific reports of activities of other species. But the author also includes much about mankind.

Dr. Scott declares that individuals can do very little about "altering the cultural methods for the control of aggression . . . [and] warfare between human societies." The best hope of preventing wars, he feels, is for individuals to obtain key positions in the organizations that can start or stop such conflicts. He interprets man's hope in terms of knowledge. His book makes no reference to the power of God, the Lord of creation, to provide man with the guidance for using this knowledge in spiritually mature ways. — *James W. Carty, Jr., Bethany College, Bethany, W. Va.*

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN HUMAN SUFFERING. *By Wayne E. Oates. Westminster. $2.75.*

WE read a new book on this subject with our guard up. We think that all has been said that needs saying, and yet, there may be some new insight from Scripture which we can use in preaching and counseling — we read and we are not disappointed. Dr. Oates preaches about the God of all comfort, revealed in Christ, who learned obedience to suffering.

Strange that the Christ should be known to us in the extreme needs of the least of these, his brethren, in their hunger, pain, discouragement, loneli-

ness and despair! He reverses our Epicurean imaginings and comes to his own, not as conqueror, not as dictator, but as suffering servant, the prototype for those who follow him.

A great mystery is this: "Who for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross." Meditate on that text — what can His ministers do about the grimness, the despair and the locked teeth attitude of the modern sufferer? Is the alchemy of love sufficient to transform grief into joy?

"The world is too much with us." We are battered with noise, harassed by talk and immobilized by appointments. When illness or sorrow strikes, we are alone and we do not have the resources to endure the silence or the aloneness or the crushing weight. The author directs us to study the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, to discover how to share another's testing experiences and thus mature as Christians.

Over and over again, Dr. Oates insists that man must learn an obedience that will conquer his sense of indirection, confusion and spiritual homesickness, and bring him a new faith in the reconciling power of his Lord. Man's chief difficulty in sorrow and suffering is a spiritual blindness which fastens his attention on the things which are seen and obliterates the things which are not seen — and that is sin. We need a spiritual cleansing which comes only through repentance and the grace of Christ. We have this assurance to the end of our day, that: "They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength." —*Herbert Beecher Hudnut, Woodward Avenue Presbyterian Church, Detroit, Mich.*

VALUES IN THE CHURCH YEAR. *By William F. Dunkle, Jr. Abingdon. $2.50.*

ANOTHER evangelical minister (a Methodist) tells how he discovered the Church Year. As a young preacher faced with the necessity of preparing a new sermon each week, he found a gold mine of suggestions in following the ancient ecclesiastical calendar. His discovery was not the product of the ivory tower but of the demands of the parish ministry. No one reading this book could accuse the author of turning to the liturgical emphasis as a substitute for living religion. Rather, this book is a witness to the helpfulness of the Church Year for preaching and teaching the fullness of the faith to growing Christians. Included are useful chapters on values of lectionaries and on choosing hymns and other church music appropriate to the rhythm of the Church Year. The most useful feature of the book is the rich storehouse of sermon suggestions, with texts, for the various seasons of the Church Year. Considerable emphasis is given to ideas for series of sermons for Advent, Lent and the Great Fifty Days between Easter and Whitsunday. The book is aimed, not just at providing the preacher with new sermon ideas, but beyond that to the fullest enrichment of the life of the congregation. The minister who knows he has been going around within the narrow circle of his own pet ideas will find his vision greatly enlarged by reading this book. — *Arthur W. Mielke, Park Central Presbyterian Church, Syracuse, N. Y.*

TRUMPET CALL OF REFORMATION. *By Oliver Read Whitley. Bethany. $3.95.*

A THREEFOLD purpose was in the author's mind as he wrote this book: (1) a study of The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) as a socio-cultural phenomenon aimed at increasing self-understanding or appraisal; (2) a contribution to the understanding of sociological concepts in the interpretation of changes taking place within a religious group; (3) a contribution to the general good of the ecumenical movement.

For the most part this purpose is achieved. Possible readers, however, should not be frightened by this tripartite division as the author has also succeeded in giving us a pleasantly written history of a religious group as it evolves from a sect to a denomination. The late Monsignor Knox of Oxford in his book *Enthusiasm* points out that, "Psychological complications all too frequently go hand in hand with a simplified theology." Some of these complications are dealt with in this book as they contribute to the formation of a sect. It is also these complications, however, which give a sect its identity.

The frontier conditions of the early 19th century made certain ears sensitive to the Call of Reformation. This call, however, is one that came from the outlying flanks rather than from the center of the Reformation front. Possibly this may be one of the reasons why the Presbyterians were unwilling to accept Thomas Campbell and his reforms and why he did not tarry long in the ranks of the Baptists. One would have liked to read more about the influences at work in this reformer's life; influences which also caused so many to rally round his standard. Despite the fact that he had no intention of forming a sect, his successors

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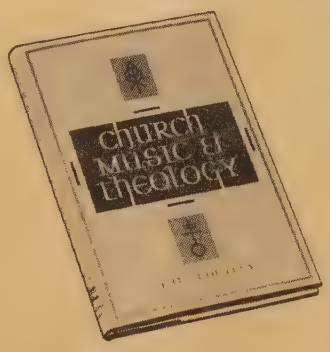

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have to recognize that their denomination, with its offshoots, has become statistical fodder as well as a strand in the many-colored fabric of American Protestantism. — *Ernest Gordon, dean of the chapel, Princeton University, Princeton, N. J.*

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THE MIND OF ST. PAUL. *By William Barclay. Harper. $3.50.*

WILLIAM Barclay knows words and the Word, and brings the two together well. Known chiefly in America for his "wordbooks" on New Testament Greek, this study of the mind of St. Paul will reveal his ability in a more connected biblical exposition. Its chapters made their first appearance as a series of articles in *The British Weekly*. They are clear, direct, reverent and conservative — and never dull. Unlike most books with so much promise in the title, this one succeeds in tantalizing the reader toward the realization that he actually is becoming acquainted with someone else's mind beyond the author's. Each chapter is an arrow directed back to the epistles of Paul, next on any reader's list after reading Barclay. — *M.E.M.*

THE SERMON AND THE PROPERS. *Vols. III and IV. By Fred H. Lindemann. Concordia. $4.50 each.*

FAVORITE SERMONS OF JOHN A. BROADUS. *Edited by Vernon L. Stanfield. Harper. $2.75.*

REACHING FOR THE MOON. *By Julius Mark. Farrar, Strauss & Cudahy. $3.00.*

THINGS COMMON AND PREFERRED. *Christian Perspectives. By Karl A. Olsson. Augsburg. $2.75.*

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THIS IS LIFE. *By John R. Brockhoff. Fleming H. Revell. $2.00.*

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THE TREASURY OF INSPIRATIONAL ANECDOTES, QUOTATIONS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS. *By E. Paul Hovey. Fleming H. Revell. $3.95.*

DID I SAY THAT? *By Leslie B. Flynn. Broadman. $2.50.*

THE above list is a fair cross section of the ever-growing field of books to help ministers help others and help themselves. Some of the books are quite valuable; each of them has something vital to say. All but the last have a concern for the heart and subject of preaching: God's revelation to man. They range from tools in the technical sense for ministers alone to books of a general character from which a layman would profit well. The reviewer groups them into three compartments in more or less arbitrary fashion: sermons, theology and technical tools.

The first four titles are within the field of sermon-study. Those who enjoyed Fred H. Lindemann's first two volumes of *The Sermon and the Propers* will be cheered to get the rest of this extensive work in its last two volumes. These books greatly illuminate the Lutheran liturgy, commenting on the "propers," the particular prayers and readings established for the several feast days, and indicating the sort of sermon appropriate for these Sundays. The period of Volumes III and IV runs from Trinity Sunday until Advent. The author is a Missouri Synod Lutheran pastor and author who has served in a number of offices of his denomination. The sermons are "liturgical sermons," and never deviate from the text or the theme of the service. The growing interest in liturgy among our free churches will be fed in this freely loving embrace of a very rigid plan of worship.

A Jewish rabbi once wisely noted that sermons become as dated as newspapers in their style and wording. This may be because they are both concerned with news, good and bad respectively! How much of the dated quality of old sermons may be due to the efforts of the preacher (like the newsman) to speak directly in a particular moment to certain people, and how much may be due to accumulating habits and customs of rhetoric will

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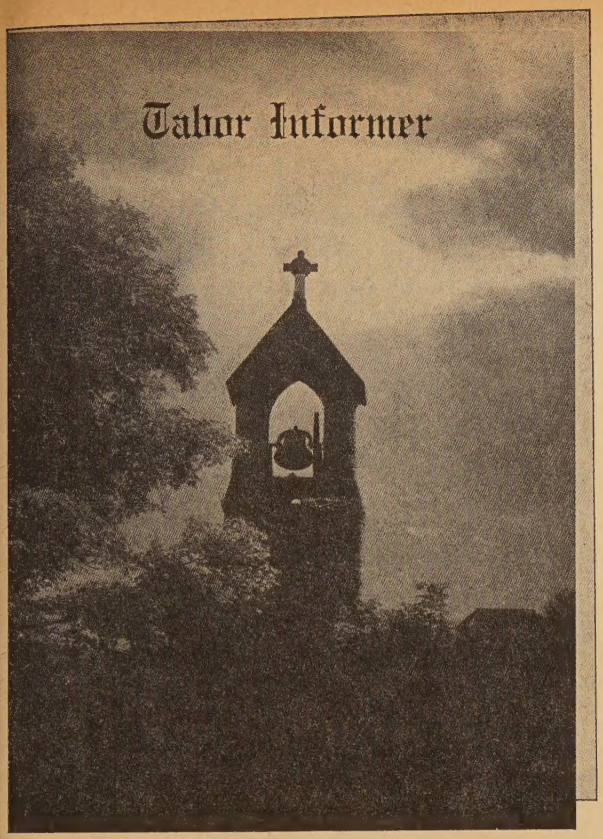

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be clarified by reading *The Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus,* a Southern Baptist preacher of the last century, and called "one of the Olympians" of the American pulpit. If northerners would scorn this moral leader because he did not speak out on the social issues which convulsed his land, the new trend in preaching to swerve from the particulars of our society to the universals of our single, religious lives would put Broadus "back in fashion" again. He hews to the line of the major religious concerns. He tries to persuade rather than to explain. Occasional illustrations glimmer, and the work is more than a mere document of bygone homiletics in its fervent sounding of the main themes of the faith. The work is a product of a recent discovery of some Broadus sermon manuscripts — a find, since the author usually preached without notes.

Good, solid wisdom and vision blend in *Reaching for the Moon,* a volume of sermons by Julius Mark, senior rabbi of New York's Temple Emmanu-El. The four divisions of the book are indicative: Faith for Our Times, Jews and Judaism, Christianity and Judaism, and Religion and Society. Here are considerations of such themes as "The Origin and Destiny of Man," "The Republic of Israel — After Ten Years," "This Delinquent Society" and "Is the Voice of the People the Voice of God?" Often the contemporary moment of preaching is the occasion for the sermon, yet each sermon reverberates against the three thousand years of the Hebrews' life with God and with each other.

Essays with sermonic punch make up *Things Common and Preferred* by Karl A. Olsson, editor of the weekly paper of his denomination, the Evangelical Covenant Church. From his columns in this paper Mr. Olsson has clipped an engaging collection of views on present-day life, well-subtitled "Christian Perspectives." The talks themselves have each a set of subtitles. Small, familiar items become springboards for thought. The old woman who swallowed the fly is dead, of course, her progressive avarice a parable and warning to those who buy a little vacation place by the lake and then have to keep it up. A number of the pieces have a dateline in Sweden or in West Germany where Mr. Olsson was a chaplain during the war.

Our next group of books, under the heading of theology, begins with *The Living Church* by Lynn Harold Hough, eminent Methodist preacher, writer and thinker, for thirteen years dean of Drew Theological Seminary. As the church builds more stately mansions, animated by public address systems, lighted with audio-visuals, alive with mimeographs, we need a book from a seasoned churchman to remind all who have, or lust after, these latter-day trappings of the church, that the church is essentially *people,* its message coming only through living voices from living and loving hearts. The easy, graceful language of the author makes the book as easy to read as his implied commands are difficult (and necessary) to discharge. The book would seem useful for an adult class text, a pastor's refresher or a guide for deacons who are bewildered or who should be.

John R. Brokhoff, author of *This*

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s Life has a title religious writers might envy. Brokhoff is pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Charlotte, North Carolina, and has written for a number of newspapers and magazines. Aspects of the Christian life as we have to live it in today's society are touched on with sometimes very telling points. Mature readers may feel that the treatment of the subject matter is too skimpy (twelve pages for the "Problems of Life"), that indeed the whole book is not quite true to its title; life is vastly more than this at its simplest. But somehow the author gets by. He does not oversimplify. He suggests more than he says. And if you stay in sympathy with him, you get to thinking about what life is. Since what most people want to know today from books or anywhere else is the answer to "What is the meaning of life?" this book should sell quite a number of copies on the strength of its title and purpose alone.

Another small book on a vast subject is *God in the Eternal Present* by Carl G. Howie, a Presbyterian minister from the South. Dr. Howie is intent upon making theology exciting for laymen by showing its relevance to our daily lives. "God meets each one of us — now, today — in the present" is the beginning *leitmotif*. The form of the book is more or less historical. We are shown the purpose and method of the Old Testament reforming prophets, Amos and Ezekiel, the witness to God of the Bible, our encounter with God, men in sin meeting Christ, the incarnation of God. We are then called to confession, service, love and the life of purpose. Again, we have an easy book for laymen who might like to get started on theology. The professional theologian will miss any concrete definitions of theological terms in a book which has a theological purpose. But Dr. Howie has perhaps wisely skirted this requirement and so has avoided offending either liberals or conservatives and all laymen, who would early feel that you can't be definite in religion without soon entering into subtle distinctions which tend to become irrelevant or partisan or both.

In the department of technical tools pure and simple, this short shelf has E. Paul Hovey's *Treasury of Inspirational Anecdotes, Quotations and Illustrations,* in number. This volume is bound to be a great help not only to ministers but to anyone who has anything worth-while to say wherever two or three or more are gathered together. The immense number of quotations means that some are bound to be included which are not in Bartlett or Burton Stevenson or any other quotation book. Many of the illustrations may seem to shed only a very little light on their subject. Perhaps the most striking thing about this collection is the vast number of contemporaries, a number of them being rather young men, who can win the unexpected thrill here of finding themselves quoted. No one has to repeat old truths as often as do ministers, and so no one will welcome with as much enthusiasm another large sheaf of new ways of saying the old, even the obvious, but always the neglected, truth. The book is blessed with dictionary, alphabetical format and an index of authors and persons mentioned at the back.

Last of all, we come to *Did I Say That?* by Leslie B. Flynn, pastor of Grace Conservative Baptist Church of Nanuet, New York, and a teacher and writer as well. My dentist once said to me when I was giving him trouble, "The tongue is an unruly member; I've had some real fights with it." Mr. Flynn's whole thesis in this book is the trouble Christian men and women have with their tongues. Rumors, barbed remarks, profanity, are all clinically dealt with here. Though its subject matter is applicable to people of all ages, it would be more tactful to present this book to groups of high school age, and much more profitable. Missing to this reviewer is any deep search for the underlying causes of malfunctioning in tongues; hence, there is danger that we may enjoy reading the book as a mirror to other people and fail to ask how it applies to us. But even this limited use of the book may make the same people more tolerable. — *Robert L. Eddy, The United Congregational Church, Little Compton, R. I.*

Pulpit Calendar

Apr. 3 — Passion Sunday.
Apr. 10 — Palm Sunday.
Apr. 10-16 — Holy Week.
Apr. 14 — Maundy Thursday.
Apr. 15 — Good Friday.
Apr. 17 — Easter.
Apr. 24 — 1st Sunday after Easter. National Christian College Day.

May 1 — 2nd Sunday after Easter.
May 1-8 — National Family Week.
May 8 — Festival of the Christian Home. (Mother's Day).
May 15 — 4th Sunday after Easter.
May 22 — Rural Life Sunday.
May 26 — Ascension Day.
May 29 — Sunday after Ascension Day.
May 30 — Memorial Day.

June 5 — Whitsunday (Pentecost).
June 12 — Trinity Sunday. Children's Sunday.
June 19 — 2nd Sunday after Pentecost.
June 26 — Nature Sunday.

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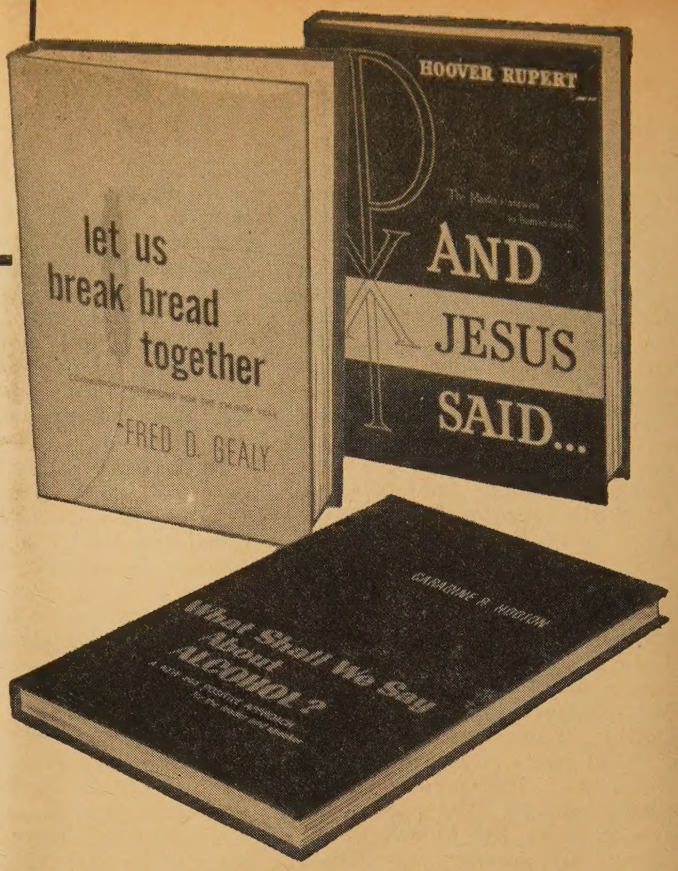

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